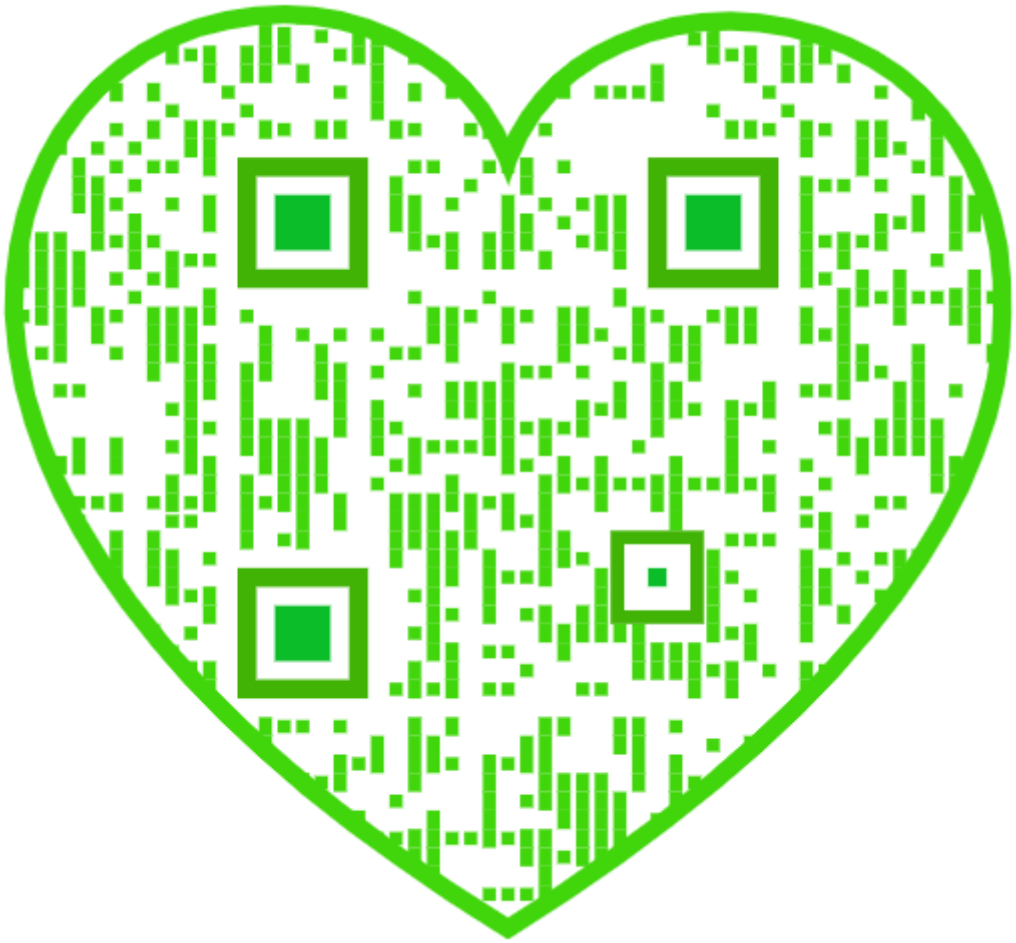

With the Translator's Compliments

HARMONIES

OF

POLITICAL ECONOMY.

HARMONIES

OF

POLITICAL ECONOMY,

BY

FRÉDÉRIC BASTIAT.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

WITH A

NOTICE OF THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF THE AUTHOR,

BY

PATRICK JAMES STIRLING, F.R.S.E.

AUTHOR OF "THE PHILOSOPHY OF TRADE," "THE GOLD DISCOVERIES AND THEIR PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES," ETC.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE first ten chapters of the *Harmonies Économiques* were all that appeared in the lifetime of the gifted author, or that had the benefit of his finishing touch. It was Bastiat's intention, had he lived, to recast the work, and to give it a wider and more comprehensive scope, embracing in his design not only the principles of Political Economy, but their applications to Social Philosophy. In the editions which have been published since his death, his friends have endeavoured, as far as possible, to fulfil his intentions in this respect, by additions carefully and judiciously selected from notes found among the author's papers,—notes written during his last illness, and necessarily imperfect. These additions were intended to be included in the present translation; but whether they are really calculated to enhance the value of the work as originally projected, has been doubted by some of the ablest critics of Bastiat. As a work on Political Economy, at all events, the portion which he gave to the world before his death develops sufficiently his original views and opinions; and it is perhaps doing no more than justice to his great reputation to introduce the *Harmonies Économiques* to the English reader—in the first instance

at least—in the exact shape in which the lamented author saw fit to present the book to his countrymen. The posthumous portions have all been translated, and are sufficiently extensive to form an additional volume, should that be afterwards resolved upon.

A word as to my mode of rendering Bastiat. I have not aimed at giving a literal translation. Indeed the language of Bastiat, who in the fervour of composition often employed words which are not to be found in any dictionary, hardly admits of literal translation. But the more important object, I trust, has been attained, of conveying fully, plainly, and intelligibly the author's precise meaning.

The materials of the following Notice of the Life and Writings of Bastiat have been borrowed partly from a short account of him inserted in the *Dictionnaire de l'Économie Politique*, partly from the Memoir and Correspondence prefixed to the author's *Œuvres Complètes*, and partly from an able article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of 1st September 1858, from the pen of M. Louis Reybaud.

P. J. S.

NOTICE

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS OF FRÉDÉRIC BASTIAT.

Frédéric Bastiat, whose last and greatest, though, alas! unfinished work—the *Harmonies Économiques*—I now venture to introduce to the English public, was born at Bayonne, on the 19th of June 1801. His father, an eminent merchant of Bayonne, died young, and his wife having died before him, Frédéric, their only child, was left an orphan at the early age of nine years.

The care of his education devolved on his paternal grandfather, who was proprietor of a land estate near Mugron, in the arondissement of Saint-Sever. His aunt, Mademoiselle Justine Bastiat, acted towards him the part of a mother, and her affection was warmly reciprocated by Bastiat, who, to the day of his death, never ceased to regard her with filial love and reverence.

Bastiat's education was begun at Bayonne, continued at Saint-Sever, and finished at the College of Sorèze. Here his course of study was occasionally interrupted by indisposition; but, on his recovery, his quick parts and steady application soon enabled him to overtake and keep pace with his fellow-students. At Sorèze, Bastiat formed a boyish friendship with M. Calmètes, to whom his earliest letters are addressed. The attachment of the youths was so remarkable, that the masters permitted them to prepare

their exercises together, and sign them with their joint names. In this way they gained a prize for poetry. The prize was a gold medal, which, of course, could not be divided. "Keep it," said Bastiat to his friend, "I am an orphan; you have both father and mother, and the medal of right falls to them."

In 1818, Bastiat left College, and, in compliance with the wishes of his family, entered his uncle's counting-house at Bayonne. His tastes, however, were for study rather than for business, and while at Bayonne he devoted his leisure hours by turns to French, English, and Italian literature. "I aim at nothing less," he said, "than to become acquainted with politics, history, geography, mathematics, mechanics, natural history, botany, and four or five languages." He was fond of music, sang agreeably, and played well on the violoncello.

In 1824, he began to study the works of the leading Economists of France and England—Adam Smith, Jean Baptiste Say, and Destutt de Tracy; and even at this early period he took an interest in the English free-trade measures of Mr Huskisson. From this time he may be said to have devoted his life to his favourite science.

On the death of his grandfather, in 1825, he gave up commerce as a profession, and took up his residence on his paternal estate at Mugron, in the cultivation of which he was at first induced to engage, but without much success, and he soon relinquished agriculture, as he had before abandoned trade. Business, in truth, was not his vocation; he had no turn for details; he cared little for money; his wants were few and simple; and he had no intention, as he says in one of his letters, to undergo irksome labour for three-fourths of his life to ensure for the remainder a useless superfluity.

It was at this period, and at Mugron, that he formed his life-long friendship with M. Felix Coudroy, to whom so much of his

correspondence is addressed, and to whom, a short time before his death, he had thought of committing the task of finishing the second volume of the *Harmonies*. The two friends, whose tastes and pursuits were the same, were constantly together,—reading, walking, or conversing. If Bastiat, whose ardent nature was impatient of plodding and systematic application, received a new book from Paris, he immediately carried it to Coudroy, who examined it, and noted the remarkable passages, which he read afterwards to his friend. Bastiat would often content himself with such fragments; and it was only when the book interested him deeply, that he would carry it off to read it carefully by himself. On these days, says his biographer, music was laid aside, and the violoncello was mute. It was thus, he continues, that the two friends passed their lives together, lodging a few paces from each other, seeing one another three times a-day, sometimes in their chambers, sometimes in long walks, sauntering together, book in hand. Works of philosophy, history, politics, religion, poetry, travels, biography, political economy, socialist works of the day,—all passed under the ordeal of this double intelligence. It was in these conversations that the ideas of Bastiat were developed, and his thoughts matured. When anything struck him particularly, he would set to work of a morning and put it into shape without effort. In this way he wrote his *Sophismes*, his article on the French and English tariffs, &c. It was this literary friendship, which lasted for more than twenty years, without being once clouded by the slightest disagreement, which prepared the mind of Bastiat for the gigantic efforts he was destined afterwards to make, and enabled him, during the last five years of his life, amid disease and distraction, to give to the world that mass of original and varied ideas which compose the six volumes of his collected works.*

* *Notice sur la vie, &c.*—*Œuvres Complètes*, t. i. pp. 10, 11.

In the events to which the expulsion of the elder branch of the Bourbons gave rise in 1830, Bastiat took an active interest. Bayonne had pronounced in favour of the new order of things. The citadel alone held out, and continued to display the white flag; and a concentration of Spanish troops on the frontier was spoken of. Bastiat did not hesitate. Quitting Mugron, he hurried to Bayonne to take part in the movement. In conjunction with some of his friends, he prepared a proclamation, formed an association of six hundred determined young men, and did not despair of reducing the citadel by a *coup de main*. Happily their martial ardour was not put to the proof. Before the march of events all resistance gave way, and that same day the citadel opened its gates. In place of a battle, there was a feast;—punch, wine, and Béranger enlivened the evening;—and the officers, like horses just let loose from the stable, were the merriest of the party.* Such was the beginning and the end of Bastiat's military career.

In 1831, he became *Juge de Paix* of the Canton of Mugron, and, in 1832, a Member of the Council-General of the Landes. The confidence and esteem of his neighbourhood would have invested him with a trust still more important, by sending him as a representative to the Chamber of Deputies; but in this, after three fruitless attempts, his friends were defeated, and Bastiat did not succeed in becoming a legislator until after the Revolution of February 1848.

He published, in 1834, *Réflexions sur les Pétitions de Bordeaux, le Havre et Lyon, concernant les douanes*,—a brochure of great vigour, and which contains the germ of the theory of Value developed fifteen years afterwards in the *Harmonies*.

In 1840, Bastiat visited Spain and Portugal; and after a

* *Correspondance—Œuvres Complètes*, t. i. p. 27. *Revue des Deux Mondes*, t. xvii. p. 139.

sojourn of some months at Madrid, and afterwards at Lisbon, with great benefit to his health, he sailed thence for England, and spent a few weeks in London. On his return to Mugron, he wrote his pamphlet, *Le Fisc et la Vigne*, in which he protests against certain new duties with which the wine-trade of his native province was threatened. In this brochure,* he gives a characteristic anecdote of Napoleon. At the outset, the duties imposed were so moderate that the receipts would scarcely defray the cost of collection. The Minister of Finance remonstrated, and represented that these imposts were making the Government unpopular, without any benefit to the revenue. "You are a noodle, Monsieur Maret," said the Emperor; "since the nation grumbles at some light burdens, what would have been the consequence had I added heavy taxes? Accustom them, first of all, to the exercise; and then we can re-form the tariff." The great captain, adds Bastiat, was also a skilful financier. Begin by inserting the thin end of the wedge—accustom them to the exercise—such is the history of all taxes.

In 1843, appeared another pamphlet, entitled *Mémoire sur la question vinicole;* and in 1844, *Mémoire sur la répartition de l'impôt foncier dans le Département des Landes*,—both productions of extraordinary ability, but having reference principally to questions of local interest and importance. The great subject of Free Trade, to which he was afterwards to devote his vast powers, had then assumed in his mind rather the form of a vague dream of what might perchance be realized under favourable circumstances at some far distant day, than of a thing in sober reality to be expected or hoped for. It was an accidental circumstance which first directed his attention to what was then passing in England under the auspices of the Anti-corn-law League.

* *Œuvres Complètes*, tome i. p. 244.

Among the circle which Bastiat frequented at Mugron there prevailed a strong prejudice, or rather an inveterate hatred, against England; and Bastiat, who had cultivated English literature, and imbibed English ideas, had often to break a lance with his acquaintances on the subject of this unfounded dislike. One of these *Anglophobes*, accosting him one day, handed him a newspaper. "Read that," said he with bitterness, "and see how your friends are treating us!" It was a translation of a speech of Sir Robert Peel in the House of Commons, which concluded with the words—"If we adopt this course, we shall fall, *like France*, to the lowest rank among nations." His country was insulted, and Bastiat had not a word to say. On reflection, however, it did appear strange to him that the Prime Minister of England should entertain such an opinion of France, and still more so, that, entertaining it, he should express it openly and offensively in his place in Parliament. To clear up the matter, Bastiat wrote instantly to Paris, and became a subscriber to an English newspaper, requesting that all the numbers for the preceding month might be sent to him. In a few days the *Globe and Traveller* made its appearance at Mugron, containing Sir Robert Peel's speech, when it was discovered that the words "like France," maliciously introduced into the French version of it, were *not* there, and, in fact, had never been uttered.

Bastiat continued to read the *Globe*, and soon made the more important discovery that a formidable agitation was at that time going on in England to which the French newspapers never once alluded. The Anti-corn-law League was shaking the basis of the old commercial legislation of England. For two years Bastiat was thus enabled to watch the progress of the movement, and at length began to entertain the idea of making known to his countrymen—and, perhaps, of inducing them to imitate—the important reform about to be accomplished on the other side of the channel.

It was this feeling which prompted him to send to the *Journal des Économistes* his first contribution, *Sur l'influence des tarifs Anglais et Français.* This article, bearing a signature till then unknown, and coming from the remote Department of the Landes, was at once accepted, and created a profound impression. Like Lord Byron, after the publication of Childe Harold, Bastiat "awoke one morning and found himself famous." Compliments and encouragements showered in upon him from every side. Further contributions were solicited, and were sent. The ice was broken, and he was fairly afloat as an author. Whilst contributing various articles to the *Journal*—among others, the first series of the *Sophismes Économiques*—Bastiat began to write the history of the English Anti-corn-law League; and, in order to obtain fuller information and more copious materials, he opened a correspondence with Mr Cobden, with whom he continued to exchange letters at frequent intervals during the remainder of his life.

It was in 1845 that Bastiat went to Paris to superintend the printing of this work, which he entitled *Cobden et la Ligue, ou l'agitation Anglaise pour la liberté des Échanges.* A luminous and spirited introduction, giving an account of the economical and political state of England prior to the Anti-corn-law agitation, and describing the origin, objects, and progress of the League, is followed by extracts from the more prominent speeches of Cobden, Bright, Fox, Thompson, and the other leaders. All this was new in France,—to the popular mind of that country it might almost be called a revelation. "I have distributed a hundred copies in Paris," writes Bastiat to Cobden, "and they have produced the best impression. Men who, by their position and pursuits, ought to know what is going on in England have been surprised on reading it. They could not believe their eyes. . . . . If I had combated directly their prejudices, I should not have

succeeded; but, by allowing the free-traders to speak and act for themselves—in a word, by simply *translating* you—I hope to have given these prejudices a blow which they cannot recover—if the book be read." In a subsequent letter, he says,—"Since my last letter an unexpected movement has manifested itself in the French press. All the Parisian, and many of the provincial journals, in reviewing my book, have given an account of the Anti-corn-law agitation. They do not, it is true, perceive all its bearings, but public opinion is awakened, which is the essential point."

To this work, and the service which it rendered to the cause of Free Trade, and of sound economic ideas, Bastiat some months afterwards owed his nomination as a Corresponding Member of the Institute. "I believe this nomination to be in itself of little importance," he writes to M. Calmètes, "and I fear many mediocrities have boasted of the title; but the peculiar circumstances which preceded my nomination do not permit me to reject your friendly felicitations. I have published only one book, and of that book the preface alone is my work. Having returned to seclusion, that preface has worked for me, and unknown to me; for the same letter which apprized me of my candidature announced my election. I had never in my life dreamt of this honour. The book is entitled *Cobden et la Ligue.* I now send it to you, which will save my saying more about it. In 1842 and 1843 I endeavoured to attract attention to the subject of which it treats. I addressed articles to the *Presse*, to the *Mémorial Bordelais*, and other journals. They were rejected. I saw that my cause was about to break down under this *conspiracy of silence*, and I had no resource but to write a book. You see, then, why I have become an author. And now, engaged in that career, I regret it extremely; for although always fond of Political Economy, I am reluctant to devote my attention exclusively to that science, and would rather wander freely over the whole field of human knowledge. Yet in

this science a single question—freedom of international relations —fascinates and is about to absorb me,—for, perhaps, you may have seen that I have been assigned a place in the association which has just been formed at Bordeaux. Such is the age; you can take no part in public life without being garrotted in a speciality."

At Paris, Bastiat had been introduced to all the leading Economists, and he was delighted with his reception. "Not one of these gentlemen," he says to M. Coudroy, "but had read, re-read, and perfectly understood my three articles. I might have written a thousand years in the *Chalosse*, the *Sentinelle*, and the *Mémorial*, without finding a single true reader but yourself. Here one is read, studied, and understood." By the whole circle Bastiat was welcomed and feasted. A desire was expressed that he should become conductor of the *Journal des Économistes*, and there was a proposal to find him a chair of Political Economy.

From Paris he passed over to England, where, in July 1845, he met with Mr Cobden, Mr Bright, and the other chiefs of the Anti-corn-law League. In a letter to his friend Coudroy, he thus describes his reception in London:—"Having installed myself at the hotel (at 10s. a-day), I sat down to write six letters, to Cobden, Bright, Fox, Thompson, Wilson, and the Secretary of the League. Then I wrote six inscriptions on as many copies of my book, and went to bed. This morning I carried my six volumes to the apartments of the League, desiring that they might be sent to the parties for whom they were intended. I was told that Mr Cobden was in town, and was to leave London to-day for Manchester, and that I should find him in the midst of preparations for his journey. (An Englishman's preparations consist in swallowing a beef-steak, and stuffing a couple of shirts into a carpet-bag.) I hastened to Cobden's residence, where I met him, and had two hours' talk. He knows French very well, speaks it

a little, and, moreover, I understood his English. I explained to him the state of opinion in France, the effects I expected from my work, &c. He was sorry to leave London, and was on the point of giving up his intended journey. Then he remarked, 'The League is free-masonry, except that every thing is public. We have a house here, which we have hired to accommodate our friends during the bazaar; it is empty at present, and we must instal you there.' I made some difficulty about this; and he rejoined, 'This arrangement may not be agreeable to you, but it will be of use to the cause, for Messrs Bright, Moore, and other members of the League pass their evenings there, and we must have you always in the midst of them.' However, as I am to join him at Manchester the day after to-morrow, I thought it hardly worth while to shift my quarters for a couple of days. He took me afterwards to the Reform Club, a magnificent establishment, and left me in the library while he took a bath. He afterwards wrote letters to Bright and Moore, and I accompanied him to the railway. In the evening I called on Mr Bright. . . . Obliged to speak slowly, in order to make myself understood, and upon subjects which were familiar to me, and with men who had all our ideas, I found myself placed in the most favourable circumstances. He took me afterwards to the Parliament," &c.

On his return from England, Bastiat again took refuge in his retreat at Mugron, where he had his time entirely at his own disposal; but he was not long suffered to enjoy his literary leisure. In February 1846, he assisted in organizing a Free-Trade Association at Bordeaux, and afterwards went to Paris with a similar object. In this he was destined to experience innumerable difficulties, not the least of which arose from his supposed attachment to English opinions. He imagined the reform of the English tariff might be the means of furthering a similar reform in France, but in this he soon found that he was greatly mistaken.

"Of all the prejudices which reign among us," says M. Louis Reybaud, in his admirable notice of Bastiat in the Revue des Deux Mondes,* "there is none more deeply rooted than distrust of England. It is enough that England leans to one side to induce us to incline to the other. Everything which England proposes is suspected by us, and we not unwillingly detect an ambush in all her measures. In matters of trade this disposition is especially manifested. In vain we imagine that England in her reforms has only her own interest in view,—her true object is only to mislead and ruin us by her seductions! If we give way we shall be fools or dupes. Such is the language of national opinion; and although enlightened men resist it, that opinion does not the less prevail and exhibit itself on all occasions. Better informed in regard to this bias of public opinion, Bastiat would have seen that the moment was not opportune, and that in the face of the English agitation he would have done better to delay, than to hasten, any agitation in France which might seem to be inspired by the spirit or example of England."

In fact, it was upon this rock mainly that Bastiat's Free-trade enterprise ultimately foundered, and he soon became convinced of the intensity of the prejudice against which he had to struggle. In a letter to Mr Cobden, written in December 1846, he says,—"This cry against England stifles us, and gives rise to formidable obstacles. If this hatred to *perfidious Albion* were only the fashion of the day, I should wait patiently until it passed away. But it has deep root in men's hearts. It is universal, and I believe I told you that my friends dare no longer talk of me in my own village, but *en famille*. This blind passion, moreover, is found so convenient by protected interests and political parties, that they avail themselves of it in the most shameless manner."

* *Tome* xvii. p. 148.

Other circumstances contributed to discourage Bastiat: "I suffer from my poverty," he tells Mr Cobden. "If, instead of running from one to another on foot, splashed and bespattered to the back, in order to meet only one or two people a-day, and obtain evasive and dilatory answers, I could assemble them at my table in a rich *salon*, how many difficulties would be removed! I want neither head nor heart, but I feel that this superb Babylon is not the place for me, and I must hasten back to my solitude." His heart was constantly reverting to the happy and peaceful days he had passed at Mugron. "I suffer," he says in a letter to Coudroy, "from leaving Mugron, and my old habits, my desultory labours, and our nice little chats. It is a frightful *déchirement;* but can I recede?" "Paris and I are not made for each other." "Often I think of Mugron, its philosophic calm, and its fruitful leisure. Here life is wasted in doing nothing, or at least in producing nothing."

Bastiat's appearance in Paris at this epoch is thus described by one of his friends. "He had not had time to call in the assistance of a Parisian hatter and tailor," says M. de Molinari; "and with his long hair, his tiny hat, his ample frock-coat, and his family umbrella, you would have been apt to mistake him for an honest peasant, who had come to town for the first time to see the wonders of the metropolis. But the physiognomy of this apparent clown was arch and spiritual; his large black eye was luminous, and his square well-proportioned forehead bore the impress of thought."

"I remember, as if it were yesterday," says M. Louis Reybaud, "the impression which he produced. It was impossible to see a more characteristic specimen of a provincial scholar, simple in his manner, and plain in his attire. But, under that homely garb, and that air of *bonhomie*, there were flashes of intelligence, and a native dignity of deportment; and you were not long in discover-

ing an honest heart and a generous soul. The eye, above all, was lighted up with singular brightness and fire. His emaciated features and livid complexion betrayed already the ravages of that disease which, in a few years, was destined to carry him off. His voice was hollow, and formed a contrast with the vivacity of his ideas and the briskness of his gestures. When the conversation was animated, his voice became feebler, and his lungs performed their office with difficulty. Better taken care of, his constitution, feeble as it was, might have lasted a long time. But Bastiat took counsel only of his energy. He never thought of how many days he had to live, but how he might employ them well."*

"I accept resolutely the hard life on which I am about to enter," he says in one of his letters. "What gives me courage is not the *non omnis moriar* of Horace, but the thought that, perhaps, my life may not have been useless to mankind."†

During the eighteen months that the Free-trade Association lasted, Bastiat's life was one of feverish activity and incessant unremitting toil. Before the doors of the Association could be opened to the public, a Government *autorisation* had to be obtained; and it was obtained at length with much difficulty and after long delay. On Bastiat, as secretary, the care of all the arrangements devolved. He had to communicate with journalists, wait upon ministers, issue manifestoes, organize committees, obtain subscriptions, correspond with branch associations, undertake journeys to Lyons, to Marseilles, to Havre, attend meetings, make speeches, besides conducting a weekly newspaper, called the *Libre-Échange*—the organ of the Association—and contributing numerous articles to other newspapers, and to the *Journal des Économistes*. "If at daybreak he observed a Protectionist sophism appear in a newspaper of any reputation," says M. de

* *Revue des Deux Mondes*, t. xvii. p. 146.

† *Correspondance—Œuvres Complètes*, t. i. p. 99.

Molinari, "he would immediately seize his pen, demolish the sophism before breakfast, and our language counted one *chef-d'œuvre* the more."

It is to the marvellous exertions of this period that we owe the *Sophismes Économiques*,—a work which arose out of the circumstances in which Bastiat found himself placed; and which, although written from day to day, amid the distractions we have described, exhibits his genius in its most brilliant light. Sprightly, lucid, and conclusive, full of fire and irony, playfulness and wit, these two little volumes afford the most unanswerable reply ever given to the fallacies of the Protectionist school; and, had Bastiat written nothing else, they would have conferred on him a just title to be regarded as the most distinguished economist of his day. The *Sophismes* have been translated into four languages, and are the best known, if not the most original, of all the works of their lamented author.

The success of the work was instant and complete. Bastiat at first complained that "three or four pleasantries had made the fortune of the book, while the serious parts were neglected;" but he afterwards confessed that "parables and pleasantries had more success, and effected more good, than the best treatises." Of these pleasantries, *The Candlemakers' Petition*, in the first series of the *Sophismes*, is perhaps the happiest, and I cannot forbear presenting the reader with a translation of this choice morsel:—

> PETITION of the Manufacturers of Candles, Wax-Lights, Lamps, Candlesticks, Street Lamps, Snuffers, Extinguishers, and of the Producers of Oil, Tallow, Rosin, Alcohol, and, generally, of everything connected with Lighting,
>
> TO MESSIEURS THE MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES.
>
> GENTLEMEN,—You are on the right road. You reject abstract theories, and have little consideration for cheapness and plenty. Your chief care is the interest of the producer. You desire to emancipate him from external competition, and reserve the *national market* for *national industry*.

you will behold gildings, bronzes, crystals, in candlesticks, in lamps, in lustres, in candelabra, shining forth, in spacious warerooms, compared with which those of the present day can be regarded but as mere shops.

No poor *Resinier* from his heights on the sea-coast, no Coal-miner from the depth of his sable gallery, but will rejoice in higher wages and increased prosperity.

Only have the goodness to reflect, Gentlemen, and you will be convinced that there is, perhaps, no Frenchman, from the wealthy coal-master to the humblest vender of lucifer matches, whose lot will not be ameliorated by the success of this our Petition.

We foresee your objections, Gentlemen, but we know that you can oppose to us none but such as you have picked up from the effete works of the partisans of Free Trade. We defy you to utter a single word against us which will not instantly rebound against yourselves and your entire policy.

You will tell us that, if we gain by the protection which we seek, the country will lose by it, because the consumer must bear the loss.

We answer:

You have ceased to have any right to invoke the interest of the consumer; for, whenever his interest is found opposed to that of the producer, you sacrifice the former. You have done so for the purpose of *encouraging labour* and *increasing employment*. For the same reason, you should do so again.

You have yourselves obviated this objection. When you are told that the consumer is interested in the free importation of iron, coal, corn, textile fabrics,—yes, you reply, but the producer is interested in their exclusion. Well, be it so;—if consumers are interested in the free admission of natural light, the producers of artificial light are equally interested in its prohibition.

But, again, you may say that the producer and consumer are identical. If the manufacturer gain by protection, he will make the agriculturist also a gainer; and, if agriculture prospers, it will open a vent to manufactures. Very well; if you confer upon us the monopoly of furnishing light during the day,—first of all, we shall purchase quantities of tallow, coals, oils, resinous substances, wax, alcohol—besides silver, iron, bronze, crystal—to carry on our manufactures; and then we and those who furnish us with such commodities, having become rich, will consume a great deal, and impart prosperity to all the other branches of our national industry.

If you urge that the light of the Sun is a gratuitous gift of nature, and that to reject such gifts is to reject wealth itself under pretence of encouraging the means of acquiring it, we would caution you against giving a death-blow to your own policy. Remember that hitherto you have always repelled foreign products, *because* they approximate more nearly than home products to the character of gratuitous gifts. To comply with the exactions of other monopolists, you have only *half a motive;* and to repulse us simply because we stand on a stronger vantage-ground than others, would be to adopt the equation, $+ \times + = -$; in other words, it would be to heap *absurdity* upon *absurdity*.

Nature and human labour co-operate in various proportions (depending on countries and climates) in the production of commodities. The part which nature executes is always gratuitous; it is the part executed by human labour which constitutes value, and is paid for.

If a Lisbon orange sells for half the price of a Paris orange, it is because natural, and consequently gratuitous heat, does for the one, what artificial, and therefore expensive heat, must do for the other.

When an orange comes to us from Portugal, we may conclude that it is furnished in part gratuitously, in part for an onerous consideration; in other words, it comes to us at *half-price* as compared with those of Paris.

Now, it is precisely the *gratuitous half* (pardon the word) which we contend should be excluded. You say, how can national labour sustain competition with foreign labour, when the former has all the work to do, and the latter only does one-half,—the Sun supplying the remainder? But if this *half*, being *gratuitous*, determines you to exclude competition, how should the *whole*, being *gratuitous*, induce you to admit competition? If you were consistent, you would, while excluding as hurtful to native industry what is half gratuitous, exclude, *a fortiori* and with double zeal, that which is altogether gratuitous.

Once more, when products, such as coal, iron, corn, or textile fabrics, are sent us from abroad, and we can acquire them with less labour than if we made them ourselves, the difference is a free gift conferred upon us. The gift is more or less considerable in proportion as the difference is more or less great. It amounts to a quarter, a half, or three-quarters of the value of the product, when the foreigner only asks us for three-fourths, a half, or a quarter of the price we should otherwise pay. It is as perfect and complete as it can be, when the donor (like the Sun in furnishing us with light) asks us for nothing. The question, and we ask it formally, is this, Do you desire for our country the benefit of gratuitous consumption, or the pretended advantages of onerous production? Make your choice, but be logical; for as long as you exclude as you do, coal, iron, corn, foreign fabrics, *in proportion* as their price approximates to *zero*, what inconsistency would it be to admit the light of the Sun, the price of which is already at *zero* during the entire day!

In addition to his other engrossing avocations in Paris, Bastiat, in the end of 1847 and beginning of 1848, delivered a course of lectures to young men on the principles of Political Economy and the Harmony of the Social Laws. He had no opportunity of committing these lectures to writing, as he wished, but we have doubtless the substance of them in his published works, especially in the *Harmonies Économiques*. "Something tells me," he says in one of his letters to M. Coudroy, "that this course, addressed to the young, who have logic in their heads, and warmth

and fervour in their hearts, will not be useless."—"My auditors," he says elsewhere, "are not very numerous; but they attend assiduously, and take notes. The seed falls into good ground."

It was in the midst of these harassing occupations and herculean exertions that the Revolution of February came to surprise Bastiat,—to put an end to the Free-trade Association,—and to bring a far more formidable set of agitators—namely, the Socialists and Communists—to the surface of society. Bastiat doubted if his country was ripe for a Republic; but when it came, he gave in his adhesion to it, and was returned by his native Department of the Landes as a Deputy to the Constituent, and afterwards to the Legislative Assembly. He took his seat on the left, says his accomplished friend and biographer M. de Fontenay, in an attitude of moderation and firmness; and, whilst remaining somewhat isolated, he was surrounded with the respect of all parties. A Member of the Committee of Finance, of which he was named Vice-President eight times in succession, he exercised a very marked influence on that department, although quietly and within doors. The increasing feebleness of his lungs prevented his often ascending the tribune or addressing the Assembly, although it was often a hard trial for him to be thus, as it were, nailed to his seat.* It is to this he alludes in the second chapter of the *Harmonies*:—"If, when the much-loved vessel of the State is beaten by the tempest, I sometimes appear to absent myself from my post in order to collect my scattered thoughts, it is because I feel my feeble hands unfitted for the work. Is it, besides, to betray my mission to reflect upon the causes of the tempest itself, and endeavour to act upon these causes? And then, what I find I cannot do to-day, who knows but it may be given me to accomplish to-morrow?"

* *Notice sur la vie*, &c.—*Œuvres Complètes*, t. i. p. 18.

In a letter to M. Coudroy, in June 1848, Bastiat thus describes his daily occupations :—" I rise at six o'clock, dress, shave, breakfast, and read the newspapers; this occupies me till seven, or half-past seven. About nine, I am obliged to go out, for at ten commences the sitting of the Committee of Finance, of which I am a member. It continues till one, and then the public sitting begins, and continues till seven. I return to dinner, and it very rarely happens that there are not after-dinner meetings of Sub-Committees charged with special questions. The only hour at my disposal is from eight to nine in the morning, and it is at that hour that I receive visiters. . . . I am profoundly disgusted with this kind of life."

But the grand work of Bastiat in 1848 and 1849—a work to which he devoted the best energies of his mind and genius—was the open and incessant war which he waged with the Socialist and Communist writers and agitators whom the Revolution had let loose on French society, and who were then shaking the social and political fabric to its centre. Bastiat, like the porcupine, had a quill pointed against every assailant. To each error he opposed a pamphlet. With Louis Blanc and the national workshops, he did battle in the brochure entitled *Propriété et Loi*, in which he exposes the illusions with which the public mind had been stuffed by the Socialists. The doctrine of Considérant he attacked in another little volume, bearing the title, *Propriété et Spoliation*. In another, *Justice et Fraternité*, he demolished the absurdities of Pierre Leroux's democratic and social constitution. Proudhon's doctrine he disposed of in *Capital et Rente*, where he refutes the foolish notions in vogue in 1848 on the subject of gratuitous loans —a subject which he again discussed in 1850, in the larger volume entitled *Gratuité du Credit*. In *Protectionisme et Communisme*, Bastiat demonstrated that what is called *protection* is nothing else than practical communism or spoliation. *Paix et Liberté, ou le*

Budget Républicain, another brochure from his prolific pen, is a brilliant and vigorous onslaught on the excessive taxation of that day, and the overgrown military and naval armaments which gave rise to it. Many passages of this admirable production, full of force and practical good sense, might be read with benefit at the present day, as applicable not only to France as it was, but to France as it is, and not to France alone, but to the other nations of Europe.

In the tract entitled *L'État*, Bastiat maintains his favourite doctrine that all which a Government owes to its subjects is security; that, as it acts necessarily through the intervention of force, it can equitably enforce nothing save Justice; and that its duty consists in holding the balance equal among various interests, by guarding the liberty of all, by protecting person and property, by enforcing covenants, and thereby upholding credit, but leaving Demand and Supply in all cases to perform their appropriate functions without restraint and without encouragement. He exposes the absurdity of men expecting everything from Government, and trusting to public employments rather than to individual exertion. He shows that, since the State is only an aggregate of individuals, it can give nothing to the people but what it has previously taken from them. *Tout le monde*, as he says elsewhere, *veut vivre aux dépens de l'état, et on oublie que l'état vit aux dépens de tout le monde.*

To this tract another is appended, to which he gives the quaint title of *Maudit Argent!* in which he exposes the popular errors which arise from confounding capital with money, and money with inconvertible paper. In this little work, Bastiat of course could not treat the subject systematically and in detail, as M. Michel Chevalier has since done in his philosophical treatise *Sur la Monnaie*;* but Bastiat's tract contains many excellent passages.

* This admirable work, the best and most complete treatise on money which exists in any language, well deserves a place in English literature.

The effect of an enlargement of the volume of currency on the value of money, for instance, is thus happily illustrated:—

Ten men sat down to play a game, in which they agreed to stake 1000 francs. Each man was provided with ten counters—each counter representing ten francs. When the game was finished, each received as many times ten francs as he happened to have counters. One of the party, who was more of an arithmetician than a logician, remarked that he always found at the end of the game that he was richer in proportion as he had a greater number of counters, and asked the others if they had observed the same thing. What holds in my case, said he, must hold in yours, for what is true of each must be true of all. He proposed, therefore, that each should have double the former number of counters. No sooner said than done. Double the number of counters were distributed; but, when the party finally rose from play, they found themselves no richer than before. The stake had not been increased, and fell to be proportionally divided. Each man, no doubt, had double the number of counters, but each counter, instead of being worth ten francs, was found to be worth only five; and it was at length discovered that what is true of each is *not* always true of all.

The pamphlets, *Baccalauréat et Socialisme*, and *Ce qu'on voit et ce qu'on ne voit pas*, belong to the following year, 1850, the last of the author's life. In the first of these, Bastiat complains of the monopoly of university degrees, and the too exclusive addiction of his countrymen to classical learning—especially Greek and Roman history—to which he attributes much of that democratic and revolutionary fervour which was ever and anon breaking out in France.

The second, *Ce qu'on voit et ce qu'on ne voit pas*, is a masterpiece worthy of the author of the *Sophismes*, and well deserves its second title of "Political Economy in One Lesson." The following extract from the first chapter of this admirable little work will give the reader some idea of the argument, and of Bastiat's lively manner of treating a subject in itself so dry and uninviting:—

The Broken Pane.

Have you ever had occasion to witness the fury of the honest burgess, Jacques Bonhomme, when his scapegrace son has broken a pane of glass? If you have, you cannot fail to have observed that all the bystanders, were there thirty of them, lay their heads together to offer the unfortunate pro-

prietor this never-failing consolation,—" There is some good in every misfortune—such accidents give a fillip to trade. Everybody must live. If no windows were broken, what would become of the glaziers?"

Now, this formula of condolence contains a theory, which it is proper to lay hold of, *flagrante delicto*, in this very simple case, because it is exactly the same theory which unfortunately governs the greater part of our economic institutions.

Assuming that it becomes necessary to expend six francs in repairing the damage, if you mean to say that the accident brings in six francs to the glazier, and to that extent encourages his trade, I grant it fairly and frankly, and allow that you reason justly. The glazier arrives, does his work, pockets his money, rubs his hands, and blesses the scapegrace son. This is *what we see.*

But if, by way of deduction, you come to conclude, as is too often done, that it is a good thing to break windows, that it makes money circulate, and that encouragement to trade in general is the result, I am obliged to cry halt! Your theory stops at *what we see*, and takes no account of *what we don't see.*

We don't see that, since our burgess has been obliged to spend his six francs on one thing, he can no longer spend them on another—*We don't see* that, if he had not had this pane to replace, he would have replaced, for example, his shoes, which are down at the heels, or placed a new book on his shelf. In short, he would have employed his six francs in a way in which he cannot now employ them.

Let us see, then, how the account stands with trade *in general.*

The pane being broken, the glazier's trade is benefited to the extent of six francs. This is *what we see.*

If the pane had not been broken, the shoemaker's (or some other) trade would have been encouraged to the extent of six francs. That is what *we don't see.*

And if we take into account what *we don't see*, which is a negative fact, as well as what *we do see*, which is a positive fact, we shall discover that trade *in general*, or the aggregate of *national industry*, has no interest, one way or other, whether windows are broken or not.

Let us see, again, how the account stands with Jacques Bonhomme.

On the last hypothesis—that of the pane being broken—he spends six francs, and gets neither more nor less than he had before,—namely, the use and enjoyment of a pane of glass.

On the other hypothesis,—namely, that the accident had not happened, he would have expended six francs on shoes, and would have had the use and enjoyment both of the shoes and of the pane of glass.

Now, as the good burgess, Jacques Bonhomme, constitutes a fraction of society at large, we are forced to conclude that society, taken in the aggregate, and after all accounts of labour and enjoyment have been squared, has lost the value of the pane which has been broken.

Whence, on generalizing, we arrive at this unexpected conclusion, that " Society loses the value of things uselessly destroyed;" and we arrive also at this aphorism, which will make the hair of the prohibitionists stand on

end, that "to smash, break, and dissipate is not to encourage national industry;" or, more briefly, that "there is no profit in destruction." . . . . .

The reader will take notice that there are not two persons only, but three, in the little drama to which we have called his attention. One of them—namely, Jacques Bonhomme—represents the consumer, reduced by destruction to one enjoyment in place of two. The glazier represents the producer, whose trade is encouraged by the accident. The third is the shoemaker (or some other tradesman), whose trade is discouraged to the same extent by the same cause. It is this third personage who is always kept in the shade, and who, as representing *what we don't see*, is a necessary element in the problem. It is he who enables us to discover how absurd it is to try to find profit in destruction. It is he who will soon teach us that it is not less absurd to try to discover profit in restriction, which is, after all, only partial destruction. Go to the bottom of all the arguments which are urged in favour of restriction, and you will find only a paraphrase of the vulgar saying,—"*If no windows were broken, what would the glaziers do?*"

The distinction thus established between immediate effects and ultimate consequences, between surface appearances and substantial realities, between *what we see and what we don't see*, the author proceeds, in the same happy vein, to apply to taxation, the proceeds of which are said to come back to the labour-market like refreshing showers,—to overgrown and unnecessary armaments, and extravagant public works, which are defended as affording employment to the working-classes,—to industrial and commercial restrictions, which are justified on the same ground,—to the questions of machinery, of credit, of colonization, of luxury and unproductive consumption, &c. The entire work does not extend to eighty pages, and in every one of its twelve short chapters Bastiat demolishes a specious fallacy or a pernicious error.

But Bastiat had been for some time meditating a greater, more elaborate, and more systematic work than any of those of which we have hitherto spoken; and it is curious to trace in his correspondence the progress of the ideas which were at length developed in the *Harmonies Économiques*. Writing to M. Coudroy in June 1845, he says—"If my little treatise of the *Sophismes Économiques* is successful, we may follow it up by another entitled *Harmonies Sociales*. It would be of the greatest utility; for it would meet

the desires of an age in search of artificial harmonies and organizations, by demonstrating the beauty, order, and progressive principle of the natural and providential harmonies." In June 1846, he writes to Mr Cobden, "I must bring out a second edition of my *Sophismes*, and I should wish much to write a little book to be entitled *Harmonies Économiques*. It will be the counterpart of the other—the first pulls down, the second will build up." In another letter, written the year after, he exclaims—"Oh, that the Divine Goodness would give me yet one year of strength, and permit me to explain to my young fellow-citizens what I regard as the true social theory, under the twelve following heads:—*Wants, production, property, competition, population, liberty, equality, responsibility, solidarity, fraternity, unity, province of public opinion.* I should then without regret, with joy, resign my life into His hands!"

On the eve of being elected a Deputy to the National Assembly in 1848, he writes from Mugron, "Here I am in my solitude. Would that I could bury myself here for ever, and work out peacefully this Economic synthesis which I have in my head, and which will never leave it! For, unless there occur some sudden change in public opinion, I am about to be sent to Paris charged with the terrible mandate of a Representative of the People. If I had health and strength, I should accept this mission with enthusiasm. But what can my feeble voice, my sickly and nervous organization, accomplish in the midst of revolutionary tempests? How much wiser it had been to devote my last days to working out in silence the great problem of the social destinies, for something tells me I should have arrived at a solution! Poor village, humble home of my fathers, I am about to bid you an eternal adieu; and I quit you with the presentiment that my name and my life, lost amidst storms, will not have even that modest utility for which you had prepared me!" . . . .

In his letters to M. Coudroy at this period, we discover the same idea working and fermenting in the mind of Bastiat, and struggling for vent and utterance. Amid the anxieties and distractions in which his duties as a Deputy involved him, he writes —"I am still convinced that the practice of affairs excludes the possibility of producing a work truly scientific, and yet I cannot conceal from you that I always retain that old chimera of my *Social Harmonies;* and I cannot divest myself of the thought that, if I had remained with you, I should have succeeded in imparting to the world a useful idea. I long much to make my retreat." In another letter to the same friend, after describing his feebleness, and intimating his intention to leave Paris to try what effect a change to his native air might produce, he adds—"I must renounce public life, and all my ambition now is to have three or four months of tranquillity to write my poor *Harmonies Économiques.* They are in my head, but I fear they will never leave it." "The crystal," he says elsewhere, "is formed drop by drop in silence and obscurity; but retirement, quiet, time, freedom from care—all are wanting to me."

In April 1849, he writes again to M. Coudroy, "I have my theory to work out, and powerful encouragements have reached me opportunely. I read those words yesterday in an English Review,—'In Political Economy, the French school has had three phases, expressed by the three names, Quesnay, Say, Bastiat.' They assign me this rank and this part prematurely; but it is certain that I have in my head a new and suggestive idea, which I believe to be true. This idea I have never developed methodically. It runs accidentally through some of my articles, and as that has been enough to attract the attention of the *savants,* and as it has already had the honour conferred on it of being considered as forming an *epoch* in the science, I am certain now that, when I give that theory in its complete state

to the world, it will at least be examined. Is not that all I could desire? With what ardour I am about to turn to account my retirement in order to elaborate that doctrine, certain as I am to have judges who can understand it, and who are waiting for it!"

The three months of leisure, so long and so anxiously wished for, came at last; and in the beginning of 1850, the *Harmonies* (or rather the portions which the author had intended should form the first volume of that work) made their appearance. The reception of the work was not at first what might have been expected; and Bastiat, again in Paris, writes to his friend M. Coudroy, "The *Harmonies* pass unnoticed here, unless by some dozen connoisseurs. I expected this—it could not be otherwise. I have not even in my favour the wonted zeal of our own little circle, who accuse me of heterodoxy; but in spite of this, I am confident that the book will make its way by degrees. In Germany it has been very differently received. . . . . I pray Heaven to vouchsafe me a year to write the second volume; after which I shall sing, *Nunc dimittis.*"

To Mr Cobden, in August 1850, he writes—"I went to my native country to try to cure these unfortunate lungs, which are to me very capricious servants. I have returned a little better, but afflicted with a disease of the larynx, accompanied with a complete extinction of voice. The doctor enjoins absolute silence; and, in consequence, I am about to pass two months in the country, near Paris. There I shall try to write the second volume of the *Harmonies Économiques.* The first has been nearly unnoticed by the learned world. I should not be an *author* if I gave in to that judgment. I appeal to the future, for I am conscious that that book contains an important idea, *une idée mère*, and time will come to my assistance."

This great work, the child of Bastiat's anxious hopes, the sub-

ject of his dying thoughts, although at first but coldly received, is perhaps the most important and the most original contribution which the science of Political Economy has received since the days of Adam Smith. On that most abstruse and difficult subject, the first principles of Value, it opens up entirely new views; while on almost every other branch of the subject, it either propounds a new theory, or corrects and improves the nomenclature of the science. Throughout, it treats Political Economy (and it is perhaps the only work which does so, at least systematically) in connexion with final causes, and demonstrates the Wisdom and Goodness of God in the economy of civil society. On some questions we may venture to differ from Bastiat. On the question of Rent, for instance, he would seem to have followed too implicitly the theory of Mr Carey, the able American Economist; but Bastiat's work, as a whole, has a freshness, a vigour, and an originality which all must admire. He writes like a man thoroughly in earnest,—a devout believer in the doctrines which he teaches, and he seldom fails to carry conviction to the mind of his readers. The leading idea of the work—the harmony of the social laws—is admirable, and is admirably worked out. The motto of the book, in fact, might have been the well-known lines of Dryden,—

> From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
> This universal frame began:
> From harmony to harmony
> Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
> The diapason ending full in Man.

Bastiat undertakes to demonstrate the harmony of the Economic laws,—that is to say, their tendency towards a common design, which is the progressive improvement of the human race. He proves convincingly that individual interests, taken in the aggregate, far from being antagonistic, aid each other mutually; and

that, so far is it from being true that the gain of one is necessarily the loss of another, each individual, each family, each country has an interest in the prosperity of all others. He shows that, between agriculturist and manufacturer, capitalist and labourer, producer and consumer, native and foreigner, there is in reality no antagonism, but, on the contrary, a community of interest; and that, in order that the natural Economic laws should act constantly so as to produce this result, one thing alone is necessary—namely, respect for Liberty and Property. His design is best explained in his own words: "I undertake in this work," he says, "to demonstrate the Harmony of those laws of Providence which govern human society. What makes these laws harmonious and not discordant is, that all principles, all motives, all springs of action, all interests, co-operate towards a grand final result, which humanity will never reach by reason of its native *imperfection*, but to which it will always approximate more and more by reason of its unlimited *capability of improvement*. And that result is, the indefinite approximation of all classes towards a level, which is always rising; in other words, the *equalization* of individuals in the general *amelioration*."

Bastiat was not one of those pessimists who persist in looking at the existing fabric of Society as if it were some ill-made, ill-going clock, requiring constantly to be wound up, and to have its springs adjusted, its wheels lubricated, and its hands altered and set right. Far from this, he regarded Society as a self-acting, self-regulating mechanism, bearing the stamp of the Divine hand by which it was constructed, and subject to laws and checks not less wise, not less immutable, not less trustworthy, than the laws which govern the inanimate and material world.

"God made the country, but man made the towns," was the exclamation of an amiable but a morbid poet. He might as well

have said—God made the blossom, but bees make the comb. Reason asks, who then made the bees? Who made man, with all his noble instincts, and admirable inventive reasoning and reflective faculties?

A manlier, because a juster, philosophy enabled Bastiat rather to say with Edmund Burke, "Art is man's nature." Looking at the existing fabric and mechanism of Society, and the beautiful harmony of the Economic laws which regulate it, he could see nothing to warrant constant legislative tampering with the affairs of trade. He had faith in moral and material progress under the empire of Freedom. Sweeping away all Socialist Utopias and artificial systems of social organization, he pointed to Society as it exists, and exclaimed, *Digitus Dei est hic.* Unlike the sickly poet, he believed that the same Good and Wise Being who created both town and country, upholds and sustains them both; and that the laws of Value and Exchange, left to their own free and beneficent action, are as much His ordinance, as the laws of motion, attraction, or chemical affinity.

Engaged upon the second volume of the *Harmonies*, Bastiat found his subject growing upon him, and discovered, as he thought, when too late, that he had not in the first instance perceived all its bearings. He felt, as he said, crushed by the mass of harmonies which presented themselves to him on every side; and a posthumous note, found among his papers, informs us that this expansion of his subject under his hand had led him to think of recasting the entire work. "I had thought at first," he says, "to begin with the exposition of *Economic Harmonies*, and, consequently, to treat only of subjects purely economical,—*Value*, *Property*, *Wealth*, *Competition*, *Wages*, *Population*, *Money*, *Credit*, &c. Afterwards, if I had had time and strength, I should have directed the attention of the reader to the larger subject of *Social Harmonies*, and treated of the *Human Constitution*, *Social Motives*,

Responsibility, *Solidarity*, &c. The work thus conceived† had been begun, when I saw that it was better to mingle together than to separate these two classes of considerations. But then logic required that the study of Man should precede the Economic investigations; and—there was no longer time."

Alas! the hours of Bastiat were numbered. He ran a desperate steeple-chase with death, to use the expression of his biographer, and he lost the day. His mind, his genius, shone as brightly, worked as intensely, as ever; but the material frame-work was shattered and in ruins. By the advice of his physicians, after resorting to the waters of the Pyrenees without benefit, he repaired to Italy in the autumn of 1850, and took up his residence at Pisa. Scarcely had he arrived there, when he read in the newspapers a premature announcement of his own death, and common-place expressions of regret for the loss of the "great Economist" and "illustrious

† The following list of chapters, intended to complete the *Harmonies Économiques*, found among the author's papers, is exceedingly interesting. Of those marked * no notes or traces were found.

NORMAL PHENOMENA.

1. Producer—Consumer.
2. The Two Mottoes.
3. Theory of Rent.
4. *Money.
5. *Credit.
6. Wages.
7. Saving.
8. Population.
9. Private and Public Services.
10. *Taxation.

COROLLARIES.

11. Machinery.
12. Free Trade.
13. Intermediaries.
14. Raw Materials—Manufactured Products.
15. Luxury.

DISTURBING PHENOMENA.

16. Spoliation.
17. War.
18. *Slavery.
19. *Theocracy.
20. *Monopoly.
21. Governmental Undertakings.
22. False Fraternity or Communism.

GENERAL VIEWS.

23. Responsibility—Solidarity.
24. Personal Interest or Social Motive.
25. Perfectibility.
26. *Public Opinion.
27. *Relations of Political Economy
    with Morals,
    *with Politics,
    *with Legislation,
    with Religion.

author." He wrote immediately to a friend to contradict the report. "Thank God," he says, "I am not dead, or even much worse. And yet if the news were true, I must just accept it and submit. I wish all my friends could acquire in this respect the philosophy I have myself acquired. I assure you I should breathe my last without pain, and almost with joy, if I were certain of leaving to the friends who love me, not poignant regrets, but a gentle, affectionate, somewhat melancholy remembrance of me."

After lingering some time at Pisa without improvement, he went on to Rome. From Rome he writes to M. Coudroy—"Here I am in the Eternal City, but not much disposed to visit its marvels. I am infinitely better than I was at Pisa, surrounded as I am with excellent friends. . . . I should desire only one thing, to be relieved of the acute pain which the disease of the windpipe occasions. This continuity of suffering torments me. Every meal is a punishment. To eat, drink, speak, cough, are all painful operations. Walking fatigues me—carriage airings irritate the throat—I can no longer work, or even read, seriously. You see to what I am reduced. I shall soon be little better than a dead body, retaining only the faculty of suffering." . . . Even in this state of extreme debility he was thinking of his favourite but unfinished work. He adds, "If health is restored to me, and I am enabled to complete the second volume of the *Harmonies*, I shall dedicate it to you. If not, I shall prefix a short dedication to the second edition of the first volume. On this last hypothesis, which implies the end of my career, I can explain my plan, and bequeath to you the task of fulfilling it."

Bastiat's career was in reality fast drawing to a close. His end was calm and serene. He seemed himself to regard it as an indifferent spectator, conversing with his friends on his favourite topics,—Political Economy, Philosophy, and Religion. He desired to die as a Christian. To his cousin the Abbé Monclar, and

his friend M. Paillottet, who stood by, he said—"On looking around me, I observe that the most enlightened nations of the world have been of the Christian faith, and I am very happy to find myself in communion with that portion of the human race." "His eye," says M. Paillottet, "sparkled with that peculiar expression which I had frequently noticed in our conversations, and which announced the solution of a problem." He beckoned his friends to come near him, as if he had something to say to them—he murmured twice the words *La verité*—and passed away.

His death took place at Rome, on the 24th of December 1850, in the fiftieth year of his age. His obsequies were celebrated in the church of Saint Louis des Français. It was in the year 1845 that he took up his residence in Paris, so that his career as an Economist had extended over little more than five years. He died a martyr to his favourite science, and we may well apply to him the beautiful lines of Lord Byron,—

Oh! what a noble heart was here undone,
When Science' self destroy'd her favourite son!
Yes, she too much indulged his fond pursuit,
She sow'd the seeds, but death has reap'd the fruit.
'Twas his own genius gave the final blow,
And help'd to plant the wound that laid him low:
So the struck eagle, stretch'd upon the plain,
No more through rolling clouds to soar again,
View'd his own feather on the fatal dart,
And wing'd the shaft that quiver'd in his heart;
Keen were his pangs, but keener far to feel
He nursed the pinion which impell'd the steel;
While the same plumage that had warm'd his nest
Drank the last life-drop of his bleeding breast.

TO THE YOUTH OF FRANCE.

LOVE of study, and lack of fixed opinions,—a mind free from prejudice, a heart devoid of hate, zeal for the propagation of truth,—ardent sympathies, disinterestedness, devotion, candour,—enthusiasm for all that is good and fair, simple and great, honest and religious,—such are the precious attributes of youth. It is for this reason that I dedicate my work to you. And the seed must have in it no principle of life if it fail to take root in a soil so generous.

I had thought to offer you a picture, and all I have given you is a sketch; but you will pardon me; for who, in times like the present,* can sit down to finish a grave and important work? My hope is that some one among you, on seeing it, will be led to exclaim, with the great artist, *Anch' io son pittore!* and, seizing the pencil, impart to my rude canvass colour and flesh, light and shade, sentiment and life.

You may think the title of the work somewhat ambitious; and assuredly I make no pretension to reveal the designs of Providence in the social order, and to explain the mechanism of all the forces with which God has endowed man for the realization of progress. All that I have aimed at is to put you on the right track, and make you acquainted with the truth, that *all legitimate interests are in harmony.* That is the predominant idea of my work, and it is impossible not to recognise its importance.

For some time it has been the fashion to laugh at what has been called the *social problem;* and no doubt some of the solutions which have been proposed afford but too much ground for raillery.

* The First Edition of the *Harmonies Économiques* appeared in 1850.—TRANSLATOR.

But in the problem itself there is nothing laughable. It is the ghost of Banquo at the feast of Macbeth—and no dumb ghost either; for in formidable accents it calls out to terror-stricken society—a solution or death!

Now this solution, you will at once see, must be different according as men's interests are held to be naturally harmonious or naturally antagonistic.

In the one case, we must seek for the solution in Liberty—in the other, in Constraint. In the one case, we have only to be passive—in the other, we must necessarily offer opposition.

But Liberty assumes only one shape. Once convinced that each of the molecules which compose a fluid possesses in itself the force by which the general level is produced, we conclude that there is no surer or simpler way of seeing that level realized than not to interfere with it. All, then, who set out with this fundamental principle, that *men's interests are harmonious*, will agree as to the practical solution of the social problem,—to abstain from displacing or thwarting these interests.

Constraint, on the other hand, may assume a thousand shapes, according to the views which we take of it, and which are infinitely varied. Those schools which set out with the principle, that *men's interests are antagonistic*, have done nothing yet towards the solution of the problem, unless it be that they have thrust aside Liberty. Among the infinite forms of Constraint, they have still to choose the one which they consider good, if indeed any of them be so. And then, as a crowning difficulty, they have to obtain universal acceptance, among men who are free agents, for the particular form of Constraint to which they have awarded the preference.

But, on this hypothesis, if human interests are, by their very nature, urged into fatal collision, and if this shock can be avoided only by the accidental invention of an artificial social order, the destiny of the human race becomes very hazardous, and we ask in terror,

1st, If any man is to be found who has discovered a satisfactory form of Constraint?

2d, Can this man bring to his way of thinking the innumerable schools who give the preference to other forms?

3d, Will mankind give in to that particular form which, by hypothesis, runs counter to all individual interests?

4th, Assuming that men will allow themselves to be rigged out in this new attire, what will happen if another inventor presents

himself, with a coat of a different and improved cut? Are we to persevere in a vicious organization, knowing it to be vicious; or must we resolve to change that organization every morning according as the caprices of fashion and the fertility of inventors' brains may dictate?

5th, Would not all the inventors whose plans have been rejected unite together against the particular organization which had been selected, and would not their success in disturbing society be in exact proportion to the degree in which that particular form of organization ran counter to all existing interests?

6th, And, last of all, it may be asked, Does there exist any human force capable of overcoming an antagonism which we presuppose to be itself the very essence of human force?

I might multiply such questions *ad infinitum*, and propose, for example, this difficulty:

If individual interest is opposed to the general interest, where are we to place the active principle of Constraint? Where is the fulcrum of the lever to be placed? Beyond the limits of human society? It must be so if we are to escape the consequences of your law. If we are to intrust some men with arbitrary power, prove first of all that these men are formed of a different clay from other mortals; that they in their turn will not be acted upon by the fatal principle of self-interest; and that, placed in a situation which excludes the idea of any curb, any effective opposition, their judgments will be exempt from error, their hands from rapacity, and their hearts from covetousness.

The radical difference between the various Socialist schools (I mean here, those which seek the solution of the social problem in an artificial organization) and the Economist school, does not consist in certain views of detail or of governmental combination. We encounter that difference at the starting point, in the preliminary and pressing question—Are human interests, when left to themselves, antagonistic or harmonious?

It is evident that the Socialists have set out in quest of an artificial organization only because they judge the natural organization of society bad or insufficient; and they have judged the latter bad and insufficient only because they think they see in men's interests a radical antagonism, for otherwise they would not have had recourse to Constraint. It is not necessary to constrain into harmony what is in itself harmonious.

Thus they have discovered antagonism everywhere:

Between the proprietor and the *prolétaire*;*
Between capital and labour;
Between the masses and the *bourgeoisie*;
Between agriculture and manufactures;
Between the rustic and the burgess;
Between the native and the foreigner;
Between the producer and the consumer;
Between civilisation and organization;
In a word,
Between Liberty and Harmony.

And this explains why it happens that, although a certain kind of sentimental philanthropy finds a place in their hearts, gall and bitterness flow continually from their lips. Each reserves all his love for the new state of society he has dreamt of; but as regards the society in which we actually live and move, it cannot, in their opinion, be too soon crushed and overthrown, to make room for the New Jerusalem they are to rear upon its ruins.

I have said that the *Economist* school, setting out with the natural harmony of interests, is the advocate of Liberty.

And yet I must allow that if Economists in general stand up for Liberty, it is unfortunately not equally true that their principles establish solidly the foundation on which they build—the harmony of interests.

Before proceeding further, and to forewarn you against the conclusions which will no doubt be drawn from this avowal, I must say a word on the situations which Socialism and Political Economy respectively occupy.

It would be folly in me to assert that Socialism has never lighted upon a truth, and that Political Economy has never fallen into an error.

What separates, radically and profoundly, the two schools is their difference of methods. The one school, like the astrologer and the alchemist, proceeds on hypothesis; the other, like the astronomer and the chemist, proceeds on observation.

Two astronomers, observing the same fact, may not be able to arrive at the same result.

In spite of this transient disagreement, they feel themselves

* The author employs the term *prolétaire*, for which we have no equivalent word, to distinguish the man who lives by wages from the man who lives upon realized property—"les hommes qui n'ont que leurs bras, les salariés."—*See post*, Chap. X. —TRANSLATOR.

united by the common process which sooner or later will cause that disagreement to disappear. They recognise each other as of the same communion. But between the astronomer, who observes, and the astrologer, who imagines, the gulf is impassable, although accidentally they may sometimes approximate.

The same thing holds of Political Economy and Socialism.

The Economists observe man, the laws of his organization, and the social relations which result from those laws. The Socialists conjure up an imaginary society, and then create a human heart to suit that society.

Now, if philosophy never errs, philosophers often do. I deny not that Economists may make false observations; I will add, that they must necessarily begin by doing so.

But, then, what happens? If men's interests are harmonious, it follows that every incorrect observation will lead logically to antagonism. What, then, are the Socialist tactics? They gather from the works of Economists certain incorrect observations, follow them out to their consequences, and show those consequences to be disastrous. Thus far they are right. Then they set to work upon the observer, whom we may assume to be Malthus or Ricardo. Still they have right on their side. But they do not stop there. They turn against the science of Political Economy itself, accusing it of being heartless, and leading to evil. Here they do violence to reason and justice, inasmuch as science is not responsible for incorrect observation. At length they proceed another step. They lay the blame on society itself:—they threaten to overthrow it for the purpose of reconstructing the edifice:—and why? Because, say they, it is proved by science that society as now constituted is urged onwards to destruction. In this they outrage good sense —for either science is not mistaken, and then why attack it?—or it is mistaken, and in that case they should leave society in repose, since society is not menaced.

But these tactics, illogical as they are, have not been the less fatal to economic science, especially when the cultivators of that science have had the misfortune, from a chivalrous and not unnatural feeling, to render themselves liable, *singuli in solidum*, for their predecessors and for one another. Science is a queen whose gait should be frank and free:—the atmosphere of the *coterie* stifles her.

I have already said that in Political Economy every erroneous proposition must lead ultimately to antagonism. On the other hand, it is impossible that the voluminous works of even the most

eminent economists should not include some erroneous propositions. It is ours to mark and to rectify them in the interest of science and of society. If we persist in maintaining them for the honour of the fraternity, we shall not only expose ourselves, which is of little consequence, but we shall expose truth itself, which is a serious affair, to the attacks of Socialism.

To return: the conclusion of the Economists is for Liberty. But in order that this conclusion should take hold of men's minds and hearts, it must be solidly based on this fundamental principle, that interests, left to themselves, tend to harmonious combinations, and to the progressive preponderance of the general good.

Now many Economists, some of them writers of authority, have advanced propositions, which, step by step, lead logically to *absolute evil*, necessary injustice, fatal and progressive inequality, and inevitable pauperism, &c.

Thus, there are very few of them who, so far as I know, have not attributed *value* to natural agents, to the gifts which God has vouchsafed *gratuitously* to his creatures. The word *value* implies that we do not give away the portion of it which we possess except for an equivalent consideration. Here, then, we have men, especially proprietors of land, bartering for effective labour the gifts of God, and receiving recompense for utilities in the creation of which their labour has had no share—an evident, but a necessary, injustice, say these writers.

Then comes the famous theory of Ricardo, which may be summed up in a few words: The price of the necessaries of life depends on the labour required to produce them on the least productive land in cultivation. Then the increase of population obliges us to have recourse to soils of lower and lower fertility. Consequently mankind at large (all except the landowners) are forced to give a larger and larger amount of labour for the same amount of subsistence; or, what comes to the same thing, to receive a less and less amount of subsistence for the same amount of labour,—whilst the landowners see their rental swelling by every new descent to soils of an inferior quality. Conclusion: Progressive opulence of men of leisure—progressive poverty of men of labour; in other words, fatal inequality.

Finally, we have the still more celebrated theory of Malthus, that population has a tendency to increase more rapidly than the means of subsistence, and that at every given moment of the life of man. Now, men cannot be happy, or live in peace, if they have not the

themselves tend to harmonious combination, we cannot do better than welcome and magnify Liberty as you do. But you have demonstrated unanswerably that those interests, if allowed to develop themselves freely, urge mankind towards injustice, inequality, pauperism, and sterility. Your theory, then, provokes reaction precisely because it is true. We desire to break up the existing fabric of society just because it is subject to the fatal laws which you have described; we wish to make trial of our own powers, seeing that the power of God has miscarried.

Thus they are agreed as regards the premises, and differ only on the conclusion.

The Economists to whom I have alluded say that *the great providential laws urge on society to evil;* but that we must take care not to disturb the action of those laws, because such action is happily impeded by the secondary laws which retard the final catastrophe; and arbitrary intervention can only enfeeble the embankment, without stopping the fatal rising of the flood.

The Socialists say that *the great providential laws urge on society to evil;* we must therefore abolish them, and select others from our inexhaustible storehouse.

The Catholics say that *the great providential laws urge on society to evil;* we must therefore escape from them by renouncing worldly interests, and taking refuge in abnegation, sacrifice, asceticism, and resignation.

It is in the midst of this tumult, of these cries of anguish and distress, of these exhortations to subversion, or to resignation and despair, that I endeavour to obtain a hearing for this assertion, in presence of which, if it be correct, all difference of opinion must disappear—*it is not true that the great providential laws urge on society to evil.*

It is with reference to the conclusions to be deduced from their common premises that the various schools are divided and combat each other. I deny those premises, and I ask, Is not that the best way of putting an end to these disputes?

The leading idea of this work, the harmony of interests, is *simple.* Is simplicity not the touchstone of truth? The laws of light, of sound, of motion, appear to us to be all the truer for being simple—Why should it be otherwise with the law of interests?

This idea is *conciliatory.* What is more fitted to reconcile parties than to demonstrate the harmony of the various branches of industry: the harmony of classes, of nations, even of doctrines?

Now, every Error engenders suffering; but either suffering reacts upon the man who errs, and then it brings Responsibility into play,—or, if it affects others who are free from error, it sets in motion the marvellous reactionary machinery of Solidarity.

The action of these laws, combined with the faculty which has been vouchsafed to us of connecting effects with their causes, must bring us back, by means of this very suffering, into the way of what is good and true.

Thus, not only do we not deny the existence of evil, but we acknowledge that it has a mission in the social, as it has in the material world.

But, in order that it should fulfil this mission, we must not stretch Solidarity artificially, so as to destroy Responsibility,—in other words, we must respect Liberty.

Should human institutions step in to oppose in this respect the divine laws, evil would not the less flow from error, only it would shift its position. It would strike those whom it ought not to strike. It would be no longer a warning and a monitor. It would no longer have the tendency to diminish and die away by its own proper action. Its action would be continued, and increase, as would happen in the physiological world if the imprudences and excesses of the men of one hemisphere were felt in their unhappy effects only by the inhabitants of the opposite hemisphere.

Now this is precisely the tendency not only of most of our governmental institutions, but likewise, and above all, of those which we seek to establish as remedies for the evils which we suffer. Under the philanthropical pretext of developing among men a factitious Solidarity, we render Responsibility more and more inert and inefficacious. By an improper application of the public force, we alter the relation of labour to its remuneration, we disturb the laws of industry and of exchange, we offer violence to the natural development of education, we give a wrong direction to capital and labour, we twist and invert men's ideas, we inflame absurd pretensions, we dazzle with chimerical hopes, we occasion a strange loss of human power, we change the centres of population, we render experience itself useless,—in a word, we give to all interests artificial foundations, we set them by the ears, and then we exclaim that—Interests are antagonistic: Liberty has done all the evil,—let us denounce and stifle Liberty.

And yet, as this sacred word has still power to stir men's hearts and make them palpitate, we despoil Liberty of its *prestige* by de-

priving it of its name; and it is under the title of *Competition* that the unhappy victim is led to the sacrificial altar, amid the applause of a mob stretching forth their hands to receive the shackles of servitude.

It is not enough, then, to exhibit, in their majestic harmony, the natural laws of the social order; we must also explain the disturbing causes which paralyze their action; and this is what I have endeavoured to do in the second part of this work.

I have striven to avoid controversy; and, in doing so, I have no doubt lost an opportunity of giving to the principles which I desire to disseminate the stability which results from a thorough and searching discussion. And yet, might not the attention of the reader, seduced by digressions, have been diverted from the argument taken as a whole? If I exhibit the edifice as it stands, what matters it in what light it has been regarded by others, even by those who first taught me to look at it?

And now I would appeal with confidence to men of all schools, who prefer truth, justice, and the public good to their own systems.

Economists! like you, I am the advocate of LIBERTY; and if I succeed in shaking some of those premises which sadden your generous hearts, perhaps you will see in this an additional incentive to love and to serve our sacred cause.

Socialists! you have faith in ASSOCIATION. I conjure you, after having read this book, to say whether society as it is now constituted, apart from its abuses and shackles, that is to say, under the condition of Liberty, is not the most beautiful, the most complete, the most durable, the most universal, the most equitable, of all Associations.

Egalitaires! you admit but one principle, the MUTUALITY OF SERVICES. Let human transactions be free, and I assert that they are not and cannot be anything else than a reciprocal exchange of *services*,—services always diminishing in *value*, always increasing in *utility*.

Communists! you desire that men, become brothers, should enjoy in common the goods which Providence has lavished on them. My aim is to demonstrate that society as it exists has only to acquire freedom in order to realize and surpass your wishes and your hopes. For all things are common to all, on the single condition that each man takes the trouble to gather what God has given, which is very natural; or remunerate freely those who take that trouble for him, which is very just.

Christians of all communions! unless you stand alone in casting doubt on the divine wisdom, manifested in the most magnificent of all God's works which have come within the range of our knowledge, you will find in this book no expression which can shock the severest morals, or the most mysterious dogmas of your faith.

Proprietors! whatever be the extent of your possessions, if I establish that your rights, now so much contested, are limited, like those of the most ordinary workman, to the receiving of services in exchange for real and substantial services which have been actually rendered by you, or by your forefathers, those rights will henceforth repose on a basis which cannot be shaken.

Prolétaires! men who live by wages! I undertake to demonstrate that you obtain the fruits of the land of which you are not the owners with less pain and effort than if you were obliged to raise those fruits by your own direct labour,—with less than if that land had been given to you in its primitive state, and before being prepared for cultivation by labour.

Capitalists and labourers! I believe myself in a position to establish the law that, in proportion as capital is accumulated, the *absolute* share of the total product falling to the capitalist increases, and his *proportional* share is diminished; while both the *absolute* and *relative* share of the product falling to the labourer is augmented,—the reverse effects being produced when capital is lessened or dissipated.* If this law be established, the obvious deduction is, a harmony of interests between labourers and those who employ them.

Disciples of Malthus! sincere and calumniated philanthropists, whose only fault has been in warning mankind against the effects of a law which you believe to be fatal, I shall have to submit to you another law more reassuring:—"*Cæteris paribus*, increasing density of population is equivalent to increasing facility of production." And if it be so, I am certain it will not be you who will grieve to see a stumbling-block removed from the threshold of our favourite science.

* I shall explain this law by figures: Suppose three periods during which capital increases, labour remaining the same. Let the total production at these three periods be as 80—100—120. It will be thus divided:

	Capitalist's share.	Labourer's share.	Total.
First Period, ...	45	35	80
Second Period, ...	50	50	100
Third Period, ...	55	65	120

Of course these proportions are merely given for the sake of illustration.

All action of governments beyond this limit is a usurpation upon conscience, upon intelligence, upon industry; in a word, upon human Liberty.

This being granted, we ought to set ourselves unceasingly and without compunction to emancipate the entire domain of private enterprise from the encroachments of power. Without this we shall not have gained Freedom, or the free play of those laws of harmony which God has provided for the development and progress of the human race.

Will Power by this means be enfeebled? Will it have lost in stability because it has lost in extent? Will it have less authority because it has fewer functions to discharge? Will it attract to itself less respect because it calls forth fewer complaints? Will it be more the sport of factions, when it has reduced those enormous budgets and that coveted influence which are the baits and allurements of faction? Will it encounter greater danger when it has less responsibility?

To me it seems evident, that to confine public force to its one, essential, undisputed, beneficent mission,—a mission desired and accepted by all,—would be the surest way of securing to it respect and universal support. In that case, I see not whence could proceed systematic opposition, parliamentary struggles, street insurrections, revolutions, sudden changes of fortune, factions, illusions, the pretensions of all to govern under all forms, those dangerous and absurd systems which teach the people to look to government for everything, that compromising diplomacy, those wars which are always in perspective, or armed truces which are nearly as fatal, those crushing taxes which it is impossible to levy on any equitable principle, that absorbing and unnatural mixing up of politics with everything, those great artificial displacements of capital and labour, which are the source of fruitless heartburnings, fluctuations, stoppages, and commercial crises. All those causes of trouble, of irritation, of disaffection, of covetousness, and of disorder, and a thousand others, would no longer have any foundation, and the depositaries of power, instead of disturbing, would contribute to the universal harmony,—a harmony which does not indeed exclude evil, but which leaves less and less room for those ills which are inseparable from the ignorance and perversity of our feeble nature, and whose mission it is to prevent or chastise that ignorance and perversity.

Young men! in these days in which a grievous Scepticism would

HARMONIES

OF

POLITICAL ECONOMY.

I.

NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL ORGANIZATION.*

Is it quite certain that the mechanism of society, like the mechanism of the heavenly bodies, or that of the human frame, is subject to general laws? Does it form a harmoniously *organized* whole? Or rather, do we not remark in it the absence of all *organization?* Is not an *organization* the very thing which all men of heart and of the future, all advanced publicists, all the pioneers of thought, are in search of at the present day? Is society anything else than a multitude of individuals placed in juxtaposition, acting without concert, and given up to the movements of an anarchical liberty? Are our countless masses, after having with difficulty recovered their liberties one after the other, not now awaiting the advent of some great genius to arrange them into a harmonious whole? Having pulled down all, must we not now set about laying the foundation of a new edifice?

And yet, it may be asked, have these questions any other meaning than this: Can society dispense with written laws, rules, and repressive measures? Is every man to make an unlimited use of his faculties, even when in so doing he strikes at the liberties of

* This Chapter was first published in the *Journal des Économistes*, January 1848. —EDITOR.

another, or inflicts injury on society at large? In a word, must we recognise in the maxim, *laissez faire, laissez passer*, the absolute formula of political economy? If that were the question, no one could hesitate about the solution. The economists do not say that a man may kill, sack, burn, and that society has only to be quiescent,—*laisser faire*. They say that even in the absence of all law, society would resist such acts; and that consequently such resistance is a general law of humanity. They say that civil and penal laws must regulate, and not counteract, those general laws the existence of which *they presuppose*. There is a wide difference between a social organization, founded on the general laws of human nature, and an artificial organization, invented, imagined,—which takes no account of these laws, or repudiates and despises them,—such an organization, in short, as many modern schools would impose upon us.

For, if there be general laws which act independently of written laws, and of which the latter can only regulate the action, we must study these *general laws*. They can be made the object of a science, and Political Economy exists. If, on the other hand, society is a human invention, if men are regarded only as inert matter, to which a great genius, like Rousseau, must impart sentiment and will, movement and life, then there is no such science as Political Economy. There are only an indefinite number of possible and contingent arrangements, and the fate of nations must depend upon the *Founder* to whom chance shall have committed their destinies.

In order to prove that society is subject to general laws, no elaborate dissertation is necessary. All I shall do is to notice certain facts which, although trite, are not the less important.

Rousseau has said, *Il faut beaucoup de philosophie pour observer les faits qui sont trop près de nous*—"Much philosophy is wanted for the correct observation of things which are before our eyes." And such are the social phenomena in the midst of which we live and move. Habit has so familiarized us with these phenomena that we cease to observe them, unless something striking and exceptional forces them on our attention.

Let us take, by way of illustration, a man in the humble walks of life—a village carpenter, for instance,—and observe the various services he renders to society, and receives from it; we shall not fail to be struck with the enormous disproportion which is apparent.

This man employs his day's labour in planing boards, and mak-

ing tables and chests of drawers. He complains of his condition; yet in truth what does he receive from society in exchange for his work?

First of all, on getting up in the morning, he dresses himself; and he has himself personally made none of the numerous articles of which his clothing consists. Now, in order to put at his disposal this clothing, simple as it is, an enormous amount of labour, industry, and locomotion, and many ingenious inventions, must have been employed. Americans must have produced cotton, Indians indigo, Frenchmen wool and flax, Brazilians hides; and all these materials must have been transported to various towns where they have been worked up, spun, woven, dyed, &c.

Then he breakfasts. In order to procure him the bread which he eats every morning, land must have been cleared, enclosed, laboured, manured, sown; the fruits of the soil must have been preserved with care from pillage, and security must have reigned among an innumerable multitude of people; the wheat must have been cut down, ground into flour, kneaded, and prepared; iron, steel, wood, stone, must have been converted by industry into instruments of labour; some men must have employed animal force, others water power, &c.; all matters, of which each, taken singly, presupposes a mass of labour, whether we have regard to space or time, of incalculable amount.

In the course of the day this man will have occasion to use sugar, oil, and various other materials and utensils.

He sends his son to school, there to receive an education, which, although limited, nevertheless implies anterior study and research, and an extent of knowledge which startles the imagination.

He goes out. He finds the street paved and lighted.

A neighbour goes to law with him. He finds advocates to plead his cause, judges to maintain his rights, officers of justice to put the sentence in execution; all which implies acquired knowledge, and, consequently, intelligence and means of subsistence.

He goes to church. It is a stupendous monument, and the book which he carries thither is a monument, perhaps still more stupendous, of human intelligence. He is taught morals, he has his mind enlightened, his soul elevated; and in order to this we must suppose that another man had previously frequented schools and libraries, consulted all the sources of human learning, and while so employed had been able to live without occupying himself directly with the wants of the body.

If our artisan undertakes a journey, he finds that, in order to save him time and exertion, other men have removed and levelled the soil, filled up valleys, hewed down mountains, united the banks of rivers, diminished friction, placed wheeled carriages on blocks of sandstone or bands of iron, and brought the force of animals and the power of steam into subjection to human wants.

It is impossible not to be struck with the measureless disproportion which exists between the enjoyments which this man derives from society and what he could obtain by his own unassisted exertions. I venture to say that in a single day he consumes more than he could himself produce in ten centuries.

What renders the phenomenon still more strange is, that all other men are in the same situation. Every individual member of society has absorbed millions of times more than he could himself produce; yet there is no mutual robbery. And, if we regard things more nearly, we perceive that the carpenter has paid, in services, for all the services which others have rendered to him. If we bring the matter to a strict reckoning, we shall be convinced that he has received nothing which he has not paid for by means of his modest industry; and that every one who, at whatever interval of time or space, has been employed in his service, has received, or will receive, his remuneration.

The social mechanism, then, must be very ingenious and very powerful, since it leads to this singular result, that each man, even he whose lot is cast in the humblest condition, has more enjoyment in one day than he could himself produce in many ages.

Nor is this all. The mechanism of society will appear still more ingenious, if the reader will be pleased to turn his regards upon himself.

I suppose him a plain student. What is his business in Paris? How does he live? It cannot be disputed that society places at his disposal food, clothing, lodging, amusements, books, means of instruction, a multitude of things, in short, which would take a long time not only to produce, but even to explain how they were produced. And what services has this student rendered to society in return for all these things which have exacted so much labour, toil, fatigue, physical and intellectual effort, so many inventions, transactions, and conveyances hither and thither? None at all. He is only preparing to render services. Why, then, have so many millions of men abandoned to him the fruits of their positive,

effective, and productive labour? Here is the explanation:—The father of this student, who was a lawyer, perhaps, or a physician, or a merchant, had formerly rendered services—it may be to society in China,—and had been remunerated, not by immediate services, but by a *title* to demand services, at the time, in the place and under the form that might be most suitable and convenient to him. It is of these past and distant services that society is now acquitting itself, and (astonishing as it seems) if we follow in thought the infinite range of transactions which must have had place in order to this result being effected, we shall see that every one has been remunerated for his labour and services; and that these *titles* have passed from hand to hand, sometimes divided into parts, sometimes grouped together, until, in the consumption of this student, the entire account has been squared and balanced. Is not this a very remarkable phenomenon?

We should shut our eyes to the light of day, did we fail to perceive that society could not present combinations so complicated, and in which civil and penal laws have so little part, unless it obeyed the laws of a mechanism wonderfully ingenious. The study of that mechanism is the business of *Political Economy*.

Another thing worthy of observation is, that of the incalculable number of transactions to which the student owed his daily subsistence, there was not perhaps a millionth part which contributed to it directly. The things of which he has now the enjoyment, and which are innumerable, were produced by men the greater part of whom have long since disappeared from the earth. And yet they were remunerated as they expected to be, although he who now profits by the fruits of their labours had done nothing for them. They knew him not; they will never know him. He who reads this page, at the very moment he is reading it, has the power, although perhaps he has no consciousness of it, to put in motion men of every country, of all races, I had almost said of all time—white, black, red, tawny—to make bygone generations, and generations still unborn, contribute to his present enjoyments; and he owes this extraordinary power to the services which his father had formerly rendered to other men, who apparently had nothing in common with those whose labour is now put in requisition. Yet despite all differences of time and space, so just and equitable a balance has been struck, that every one has been remunerated, and has received exactly what he calculated he ought to receive.

But, in truth, could all this have happened, and such phenomena

been witnessed, unless society had had a natural and wise *organization*, which acts, as it were, unknown to us?

Much has been said in our day of inventing a new *organization*. Is it quite certain, that any thinker, whatever genius we may attribute to him, whatever power we may suppose him to possess, could imagine and introduce an organization superior to that of which I have just sketched some of the results?

But what would be thought of it if I described its machinery, its springs, and its motive powers?

The machinery consists of men, that is to say, of beings capable of learning, reflecting, reasoning, of being deceived and undeceived, and consequently of contributing to the amelioration or deterioration of the mechanism itself. They are capable of pleasure and pain; and it is that which makes them not only the wheels but the springs of the mechanism. They are also the motive power; for it is in them that the active principle resides. More than that, they are themselves the very end and object of the mechanism, since it is into individual pains and enjoyments that the whole definitely resolves itself.

Now it has been remarked, and it is unhappily obvious enough, that in the action, the development, and even the progress (by those who acknowledge progress) of this powerful mechanism, many of the wheels have been inevitably, fatally injured; and that, as regards a great number of human beings, the sum of unmerited suffering surpasses by much the sum of enjoyment.

This view of the subject has led many candid minds, many generous hearts, to suspect the mechanism itself. They have repudiated it, they have refused to study it, they have attacked, often with passion, those who have investigated and explained its laws. They have risen against the nature of things, and at length they have proposed to *organize* society upon a new plan, in which injustice and suffering and error shall have no place.

God forbid that I should set myself against intentions manifestly pure and philanthropical! But I should desert my principles, and do violence to the dictates of my own conscience, did I not declare that these men are in my opinion upon a wrong path.

In the first place, they are reduced, by the very nature of their propagandism, to the melancholy necessity of disowning the good which society develops, of denying its progress, of imputing to it all sufferings, of hunting after these with avidity, and exaggerating them beyond measure.

When a man believes that he has discovered a social organization different from that which results from the ordinary tendencies of human nature, it is quite necessary, in order to obtain acceptance for his invention, to paint the organization he wishes to abolish in the most sombre colours. Thus the publicists to whom I am alluding, after having proclaimed enthusiastically, and perhaps with exaggeration, the perfectibility of man, fall into the strange contradiction of maintaining that society is becoming more and more deteriorated. According to them, men are a thousand times more unhappy than they were in ancient times under the feudal *régime*, and the yoke of slavery. The world is become a hell. Were it possible to conjure up the Paris of the tenth century, I venture to think that such a thesis would be found untenable.

Then they are led to condemn the very mainspring of human action—I mean a regard to *personal interest*, because it has brought about such a state of things. Let us remark that man is so organized as to seek for enjoyment and avoid suffering. From this source I allow that all social evils take their rise—war, slavery, monopoly, privilege; but from the same source springs all that is good, since the satisfaction of wants and repugnance to suffering are the motives of human action. The business then is to discover whether this incitement to action, by its universality—from individual becoming social—is not in itself a principle of progress.

At all events, do the inventors of new organizations not perceive that this principle, inherent in the very nature of man, will follow them into their systems, and that there it will make greater havoc than in our natural organization, in which the interest and unjust pretensions of one are at least restrained by the resistance of all? These writers always make two inadmissible suppositions — the first is, that society, such as they conceive it, will be directed by infallible men denuded of this motive of self-interest; and, secondly, that the masses will allow themselves to be directed by these men.

Finally, these system-makers appear to give themselves no trouble about the means of execution. How are they to establish their system? How are they to induce all mankind at once to give up the principle upon which they now act—the attraction of enjoyment, and the repugnance to pain? It would be necessary, as Rousseau has said, *to change the moral and physical constitution of man.*

In order to induce men at once to throw aside, as a worn-out

garment, the existing social order in which the human race has lived and been developed from the beginning to our day, to adopt an organization of human invention and become docile parts of another mechanism, there are, it seems to me, only two means which can be employed—Force, or Universal Consent.

The founder of the new system must have at his disposal a force capable of overcoming all resistance, so that humanity shall be in his hands only as so much melting wax to be moulded and fashioned at his pleasure—or he must obtain by persuasion an assent so complete, so exclusive, so blind even, as to render unnecessary the employment of force.

I defy any one to point out to me a third means of establishing or introducing into human practice a *Phalanstère*,* or any other artificial social organization.

Now, if there be only two assumed means, and if we have demonstrated that the one is as impracticable as the other, we have proved that these system-makers are losing both their time and their trouble.

As regards the disposal of a material force which should subject to them all the kings and peoples of the earth, this is what these dotards, senile as they are, have never dreamt of. King Alphonsus had presumption and folly enough to exclaim, that "If he had been taken into God's counsels, the planetary system should have been better arranged." But although he set his *wisdom* above that of the Creator, he was not mad enough to wish to struggle with the *power* of Omnipotence, and history does not tell us that he ever actually tried to make the stars turn according to the laws of his invention. Descartes likewise contented himself with constructing a tiny world with dice and strings, knowing well that he was not *strong* enough to remove the universe. We know no one but Xerxes who, in the intoxication of his power, dared to say to the waves, "Thus far shall ye come, and no farther." The billows did not recede before Xerxes, but Xerxes retreated before the billows; and without this humiliating but wise precaution he would certainly have been drowned.

Force, then, is wanting to the organizers who would subject humanity to their experiments. When they shall have gained over to their cause the Russian autocrat, the shah of Persia, the khan of Tartary, and all the other tyrants of the world, they will

* Allusion to a socialist work of the day—*La Reforme industrielle, ou la Phalanstère, par Ch. Fourier.*—TRANSLATOR.

find that they still want the power to distribute mankind into groups and classes, and to annihilate the general laws of property, exchange, inheritance, and family; for even in Russia, in Persia, and in Tartary, it is necessary to a certain extent to consult the feelings, habits, and prejudices of the people. Were the emperor of Russia to take it into his head to set about *altering the moral and physical constitution of his subjects*, it is probable that he would soon have a successor, and that his successor would be better advised than to pursue the experiment.

But since *force* is a means quite beyond the reach of our numerous system-makers, no other resource remains to them but to obtain *universal consent.*

There are two modes of obtaining this—namely, Persuasion and Imposture.

Persuasion! but have we ever found two minds in perfect accord upon all the points of a single science? How then are we to expect men of various tongues, races, and manners, spread over the surface of the globe, most of them unable to read, and destined to die without having even heard the name of the *reformer*, to accept with unanimity the universal science? What is it that you aim at? At changing the whole system of labour, exchanges, and social relations, domestic, civil, and religious; in a word, at altering the whole physical and moral constitution of man; and you hope to rally mankind, and bring them all under this new order of things, by conviction!

Verily you undertake no light or easy duty.

When a man has got the length of saying to his fellows:

"For the last five thousand years there has been a misunderstanding between God and man;

"From the days of Adam to our time, the human race have been upon a wrong course—and, if only a little confidence is placed in me, I shall soon bring them back to the right way;

"God desired mankind to pursue a different road altogether, but they have taken their own way, and hence evil has been introduced into the world. Let them turn round at my call, and take an opposite direction, and universal happiness will then prevail."

When a man sets out in this style it is much if he is believed by five or six adepts; but between that and being believed by one thousand millions of men the distance is great indeed.

And then, remember that the number of social inventions is as

vast as the domain of the imagination itself; that there is not a publicist or writer on social economy who, after shutting himself up for a few hours in his library, does not come forth with a ready-made plan of artificial organization in his hand; that the inventions of Fourier, Saint Simon, Owen, Cabet, Blanc, &c., have no resemblance whatever to each other; that every day brings to light a new scheme; and that people are entitled to have some little time given them for reflection before they are called upon to reject the social organization which God has vouchsafed them, and to make a definite and irrevocable choice among so many newly invented systems. For what would happen if, after having selected one of these plans, a better should present itself! Can the institutions of property, family, labour, exchange, be placed every day upon a new basis? Are we to be forced to change the organization of society every morning?

"Thus, then," says Rousseau, "the legislator being able to employ effectively neither force nor persuasion, he is under the necessity of having recourse to an authority of another kind, which carries us along without violence, and persuades without convincing us."

What is that authority? Imposture. Rousseau dares not give utterance to the word, but, according to his invariable practice in such a case, he places it behind the transparent veil of an eloquent tirade.

"This is the reason," says he, "which in all ages has forced the Fathers of nations to have recourse to the intervention of heaven, and to give the credit of their own wisdom to the gods, in order that the people, submitting to the laws of the state as to those *of nature*, and acknowledging the same power in the formation of man and of the commonwealth, should obey *freely* and bear willingly the yoke of the public felicity. This *sublime* reason, which is above the reach of vulgar souls, is that *whose decisions the legislator puts into the mouth of the immortals*, in order to *carry along* by divine authority those who cannot be moved by considerations of human prudence. But it is not for every man to make *the gods* speak," &c.

And in order that there may be no mistake, he cites Machiavel, and allows him to complete the idea: "Mai non fu alcuno ordinatore de leggi STRAORDINARIE in un popolo che non ricorresse a Dio."

But why does Machiavel counsel us to have recourse to *God*,

Rousseau was convinced that *isolation* was man's *natural state*, and, consequently, that *society* was a human invention. "*The social order*," he says in the outset, "*comes not from nature*, and is therefore founded on convention."

This philosopher, although a passionate lover of liberty, had a very low opinion of men. He believed them to be quite incapable of forming for themselves good institutions. The intervention of a founder, a legislator, a father of nations, was therefore indispensable.

"A people subjected to laws," says he, "should be the authors of them. It belongs alone to those who associate to adjust the conditions of their association; but how are they to regulate them? By common consent, or by sudden inspiration? How should a blind multitude, who frequently know not what they want, because they rarely know what is good for them, accomplish of themselves an enterprise so great and so difficult as the formation of a system of laws?... Individuals perceive what is good, and reject it—the public wishes for what is good, but cannot discover it;—all are equally in want of guides.... Hence the necessity of a legislator."

That legislator, as we have already seen, "not being able to employ force or reason, is under the necessity of having recourse to an authority of another kind;" that is to say, in plain terms, to deception.

It is impossible to give an idea of the immense height at which Rousseau places his legislator above other men:

"Gods would be necessary in order to give laws to men.... He who dares to found a nation must feel himself in a condition to change human nature, so to speak,... to alter the constitution of man in order to strengthen it.... He must take from man his own force, in order to give him that which is foreign to him.... The lawgiver is in all respects an extraordinary man in the state... his employment is a peculiar and superior function which has nothing in common with ordinary government.... If it be true that a great prince is a rare character, what must a great lawgiver be? The first has only to follow the model which the other is to propose to him. The one is the mechanician who invents the machine—the other merely puts it together and sets it in motion."

And what is the part assigned to human nature in all this? It is but the base material of which the machine is composed.

In sober reality, is this anything else than pride elevated to

during the election of their members of parliament; the moment the election is over, they are slaves—they are nothing."

The people, if they will be free, must, then, themselves perform all duties in connexion with the public service, for it is in that that liberty consists. They must be always voting and electing, always in the market-place. Woe to him who takes it into his head to work for his living! the moment a citizen begins to mind his own affairs, that instant (to use Rousseau's favourite phrase) *tout est perdu*—all is over with him.

And yet the difficulty is by no means trifling. How are we to manage? for, after all, before we can either practise virtue, or exercise liberty, we must have the means of living.

We have already remarked the rhetorical veil under which Rousseau conceals the word *Imposture*. We shall now see how, by another dash of eloquence, he evades the conclusion of his whole work, which is *Slavery*.

"Your ungenial climate entails upon you additional wants. For six months of the year you cannot frequent the market-place, your hoarse voices cannot make themselves audible in the open air, and you fear poverty more than slavery."

"You see clearly that you cannot be free."

"What! liberty maintain itself only by the aid of servitude? Very likely!"

Had Rousseau stopt short at this dreadful word, the reader would have been shocked. It was necessary therefore to have recourse to imposing declamation, and Rousseau never fails in that.

"All things that are unnatural (it is society he is speaking of) are inconvenient, and civil society more so than all the rest. There are unfortunate situations in which one man cannot maintain his liberty but at the expense of another, and where the citizen cannot be entirely free unless the rigours of slavery are extreme. As for you, modern people, you have no slavery, but you are yourselves slaves. You purchase other men's liberty with your own. In vain you boast of this advantage. I see in it rather cowardice than humanity."

I ask, does not this mean: Modern people, you would do infinitely better not to be slaves, but to possess slaves?

I trust the reader will have the goodness to pardon this long digression, which is by no means useless or inopportune. Rousseau and his disciples of the Convention have been held up to us of late as the apostles of human fraternity. Men for materials, a

ruler for mechanician, a father of nations for inventor, a philosopher above them all—imposture for means, slavery for result,—is this the fraternity which is promised us?

This work of Rousseau to which I have referred—the *Contrat Social*—appears to me well fitted to exhibit the characteristics of these artificial social organizations. The inventors of such systems set out with the idea that society is a state contrary to nature, and they seek to subject humanity to different combinations. They forget that its motive power, its spring of action, is in itself. They regard men as base materials, and aspire to impart to them movement and will, sentiment and life; placing themselves at an immeasurable height above the whole human race. These are features common to all the inventors of social organizations. The inventions are different—the inventors are alike.

Among the new arrangements which feeble mortals are invited to make trial of, there is one which is presented to us in terms worthy of attention. Its formula is: *Association voluntary and progressive.*

But *Political Economy* is founded exactly on the datum, that *society* is nothing else than *association* (such as the above three words describe it)—association, very imperfect at first, because man is imperfect; but improving as man improves, that is to say, *progressive.*

Is your object to effect a more intimate association between labour, capital, and talent, insuring thereby to the members of the human family a greater amount of material enjoyment—enjoyment more equally distributed? If such associations are *voluntary;* if force and constraint do not intervene; if the cost is defrayed by those who enter these associations, without drawing upon those who refuse to enter them, in what respect are they repugnant to Political Economy? Is it not the business of Political Economy, as a science, to examine the various forms in which men may unite their powers, and divide their employments, with a view to greater and more widely diffused prosperity? Does trade not frequently afford us examples of two, three, or four persons uniting to form such associations? Is *Métayage** not a sort of informal association of capital and labour? Have we not in recent times seen joint stock companies formed which afford to the smallest capitals the

* *Métayage* is a mode of letting farms in the south of Europe, where the landlord furnishes a proportion of the means of cultivation, and shares the produce with the cultivator, or *métayer*.—TRANSLATOR.

opportunity of taking part in the most extensive enterprises? Have we not certain manufactures in which it is sought to give the labourers an interest in the profits? Does Political Economy condemn those efforts of men to make their industry more productive and profitable? Does she affirm anywhere that human nature has reached perfection? Quite the contrary. I believe that there is no science which demonstrates more clearly that society is still in its infancy.

But whatever hopes we may entertain as to the future, whatever ideas we may conceive as to the measures that men may adopt for the improvement of their mutual relations, and the diffusion of happiness, knowledge, and morality, we must never forget that society is an organization which has for its element a moral and intelligent agent, endued with free will, and susceptible of improvement. If you take away Liberty from man, he becomes nothing else than a rude and wretched machine.

Liberty would seem not to be wanted in our days. In France, the privileged land of fashion, freedom appears to be no longer in repute. For myself, I say that he who rejects liberty has no faith in human nature. Of late the distressing discovery seems to have been made that liberty leads inevitably to monopoly.* This monstrous union, this unnatural conjunction, does not exist; it is the imaginary fruit of an error which the light of Political Economy speedily dissipates. Freedom engender monopoly! Oppression the offspring of liberty! To affirm this is to affirm that the tendencies of human nature are radically bad—bad in themselves, in their nature, in their essence. It is to affirm that the natural bent of man is to deterioration; that the human mind is irresistibly attracted towards error. To what end, then, our schools, our studies, our inquiries, our discussions, unless to accelerate our progress towards that fatal descent; since to teach men to judge, to distinguish, to select, is only to teach them to commit suicide. And if the tendencies of human nature are essentially perverse, where are the organizers of new social systems to place the fulcrum of that lever by which they hope to effect their changes? It must be somewhere beyond the limits of the present domain of humanity. Do they search for it in themselves—in their own minds and hearts? They are not gods yet;

* "It is averred that the régime of free competition demanded by an ignorant Political Economy, and intended to do away with monopolies, tends only to the general organization of monster monopolies in all departments."—*Principes du Socialisme, par M. Considérant*, p. 15.

they are men, and tending, consequently, along with the whole human race, towards the fatal abyss. Shall they invoke the intervention of the state? The state also is composed of men. They must therefore prove that they form a distinct class, for whom the general laws of society are not intended, since it is their province to make these laws. Unless this be proved, the difficulty is not removed, it is not even diminished.

Let us not thus condemn human nature before studying its laws, its forces, its energies, its tendencies. Newton, after he discovered attraction, never pronounced the name of God without uncovering his head. Yet the celestial mechanism is subject to laws of which it has no consciousness; and the social world is as much superior to that which called forth the admiration of Newton as mind is superior to matter. How much more reason, then, have we to bow before Omniscience when we behold the social mechanism, which universal intelligence no less pervades (*mens agitat molem*); and which presents, moreover, this extraordinary phenomenon, that every atom of which it is composed is an animated thinking being, endued with marvellous energy, and with that principle of all morality, all dignity, all progress, the exclusive attribute of man—LIBERTY.

II.

WANTS, EFFORTS, SATISFACTIONS.*

WHAT a profoundly afflicting spectacle France presents to us!

It would be difficult to say if anarchy has passed from ideas to facts, or from facts to ideas, but it is certain that it pervades all, and abounds everywhere.

The poor rise up against the rich, men without fortune or profession against property; the populace against the bourgeoisie; labour against capital; agriculture against manufactures; the country against the town; the provinces against the metropolis; the denizen against the stranger.

And theorists step in, and form a system of this antagonism. "It is the *inevitable* result, they say, of the nature of things, that is to say, of Liberty. Man is endued with *self-love*, and hence comes all the evil; for since he is endued with self-love, he seeks to better his own condition, and he can only do so by entailing misery on his brethren. Let us hinder him, then, from following his inclinations; let us stifle his liberty, change the human heart, substitute other motives for those which God has placed there; let us invent and constitute an artificial society!"

When they have got this length, an unlimited career opens itself to their reason or imagination. If they are possessed of a disputatious turn and a peevish temper, they enter with eagerness into an analysis of Evil. They dissect it, they put it in the crucible, they interrogate it, they remount to its causes, they pursue it to its consequences; and, as by reason of our native imperfection there is nothing in which Evil is not present, they asperse and disparage everything. They exhibit to us Property, Family, Capital, Labour, Competition, Liberty, Personal Interest, only in one of their aspects, and always on the dark side, the side which injures or

* This and the following chapter were inserted in the *Journal des Économistes*, September and December 1848.—EDITOR.

destroys. Their lectures on the natural history of man are, if I may use the expression, clinical lectures—the subject is always on his deathbed. They impiously defy God to reconcile what is said of his infinite goodness with the existence of evil. They stain and sully everything; they disgust us with everything; they dispute everything; and yet they obtain only a melancholy and dangerous success with those classes whom suffering disposes but too much to despair.

If, on the other hand, such theorists have a heart open to benevolence, a mind which is pleased with illusions, they rush to the region of chimeras. They dream of an Oceana, an Atlantis, a Salente, a Spensonie, an Icarie, a Utopia, a Phalanstère,* and they people these imaginary regions with a docile, loving, devoted race who always avoid setting themselves up against the fancies of the dreamer. He instals himself complacently in the seat of Providence. He arranges, he disposes, he moulds men after his own fancy. Nothing stops him. He never encounters deceit. He resembles the Roman preacher, who, after having transformed his square cap into Rousseau, refuted warmly the *Contrat social*, and triumphantly reduced his adversary to silence. It is thus that our Reformers dazzle those who suffer by means of seductive pictures of ideal felicity, well fitted to disgust them with the hard necessities of real life.

The theorist, however, rarely confines himself to such innocent chimeras. The moment he aims at leading mankind, he finds the people impatient of attempted transformations. Men resist—they get angry. In order to gain them over, he harangues them not only on the happiness they reject, but more especially on the evils from which he professes to deliver them. He finds it impossible to make too striking a picture. He is continually charging his palette and deepening his colours. He hunts out the evils of existing society with as much zeal as another employs in discovering the good. He sees nothing but sufferings, rags, leanness, starvation, pain, oppression. He is enraged that society has not a deeper sense of its misery. He neglects no means of making it throw off its insensibility, and, having begun with benevolence, he ends with misanthropy.†

* Icarie, Phalanstère, &c.,—allusion to Socialist works of the day.—TRANSLATOR.

† "Our industrial régime, founded on competition without guarantee and without organization, is then only a social hell, a vast realization of all the torments and all the punishments of the ancient Tænarus. There is one difference, however—namely, the victims."—(*Vide Considérant.*)

God forbid that I should call in question the sincerity of any one. But, in truth, I cannot explain to myself how these writers, who see a radical antagonism in the natural order of things, can ever taste a moment's calm or repose. Discouragement and despair would seem to be their unhappy portion. For, to sum up all, if nature is mistaken in making *personal interest* the mainspring of human society (and the mistake is manifest if it be admitted that the interests of society are fatally antagonistic), how do they not perceive that the evil is without remedy? Being men ourselves, and being able to have recourse only to men, where can be our *point d'appui* for changing the tendencies of human nature? Shall we invoke the Police, the Magistracy, the State, the Legislature? That would only be to invoke men, that is to say, beings subject to the common infirmity. Shall we address ourselves to Universal Suffrage? That would be to give the freest course to the universal tendency.

Only one expedient remains to these gentlemen. It is to hold themselves out as discoverers, as prophets, made of different clay from their fellow-men, and deriving their inspiration from a different source. This is the reason, no doubt, why we find them so frequently enveloping their systems and their counsels in a mystic phraseology. But if they are ambassadors of God, let them exhibit their credentials. In effect, what they demand is sovereign power, despotism the most absolute that ever existed. They not only wish to govern our acts, but to revolutionize our thoughts. Do they hope that mankind will believe them on their word, when they are not able to agree among themselves?

But before even examining their projects of artificial societies, is there not one point upon which it is necessary to assure ourselves, namely, whether they are not mistaken in the very foundation of their argument? Is it quite certain that MEN'S INTERESTS ARE NATURALLY ANTAGONISTIC; that an irremediable cause of inequality is fatally developed in the natural order of human society under the influence of personal interest, and that Providence is manifestly in error in ordaining that the progress of man should be towards ease and competency?

This is what I propose to inquire into.

Taking man as it has pleased God to constitute him, capable of foresight and experience, perfectible, endued with self-love, it is true,—but self-love qualified by the sympathetic principle, and at all events restrained and balanced by encountering an analogous

sentiment universally prevailing in the medium in which it acts,—I proceed to inquire what social order must necessarily result from the combination and free play of such elements.

If we find that this result is nothing else than a progressive march towards prosperity, improvement, and equality,—a sustained approximation of all classes towards the same physical, intellectual, and moral level, accompanied by a constant elevation of that level, the ways of God to man will be vindicated. We shall learn with delight that there is no gap, no blank, in creation, and that the social order, like everything else, attests the existence of those *harmonic laws* before which Newton bowed his head, and which elicited from the Psalmist the exclamation, "*the heavens declare the glory of God.*"

Rousseau has said, "If I were a prince or a legislator, I should not lose my time in pointing out what was necessary to be done—I should do it, or hold my tongue."

I am not a *prince*, but the confidence of my fellow-citizens has made me a *legislator*. Perhaps they will tell me that this is the time for me to act and not to write.

Let them pardon me. Whether it be truth itself which urges me on, or that I am the dupe of an illusion, I have never ceased to feel the want of concentrating those ideas which have hitherto failed to find acceptance when presented in detached portions. I think I discover in the play of the natural laws of society sublime and consoling *harmonies*. What I see, or think I see, ought I not to try to exhibit to others, in order to rally round a sentiment of concord and fraternity many unsettled minds, many imbittered hearts? If, when the much-loved vessel of the state is beat by the tempest, I sometimes appear to absent myself from my post, in order to collect my scattered thoughts, it is because I feel my feeble hands unfitted for the work. Is it, besides, to betray my mission, to reflect upon the causes of the tempest itself, and endeavour to act upon these causes? And then, what I find I cannot do to-day, who knows but it may be given me to accomplish to-morrow?

I shall begin by establishing some Economical ideas. Availing myself of the works of my predecessors, I shall endeavour to sum up the science in one principle—true, simple, and prolific—of which we have had a glimpse from the beginning, to which we are constantly drawing nearer and nearer, and of which, perhaps, the time is now come to fix the formula. By the light thus afforded, I

shall afterwards essay the solution of some yet disputed problems —Competition, Machinery, Foreign trade, Luxury, Capital, Rent, &c. I shall note some of the relations, or, I should rather say, the harmonies, of Political Economy, with the other moral and social sciences, glancing at the important subjects indicated by the terms—Personal Interest, Property, Community, Liberty, Equality, Responsibility, Solidarity, Fraternity, Unity. Last of all, I shall invite attention to the artificial obstacles which the pacific, regular, and progressive development of human society encounters. From these two ideas—Natural harmonic Laws—Artificial disturbing Causes—will be deduced the solution of the Social Problem.

It is easy to see that there are two rocks ahead upon which this undertaking may founder. In the middle of the vortex in which we are carried along, if this work is abstruse, it will not be read; if it obtains readers, the questions of which it treats will be but glanced at. How are we to reconcile the exactions of the reader with the requirements of science? To satisfy all conditions both in form and substance, each word would require to be weighed, and have its proper place assigned to it. It is thus that the crystal is formed drop by drop in silence and obscurity. Retirement, quiet, time, freedom from care—all are wanting to me—and I am forced to trust to the sagacity of the public, and throw myself on its indulgence.

The subject of Political Economy is Man.

But it does not embrace the whole range of human affairs. The science of morals has appropriated all that comes within the attractive regions of Sympathy — the religious sentiment, paternal and maternal tenderness, filial piety, love, friendship, patriotism, charity, politeness. To Political Economy is left only the cold domain of Personal interest. This is unjustly forgotten when Economical science is reproached with wanting the charm and unction of morals. How can it be otherwise? Dispute its right to existence as a science, but don't force it to counterfeit what it is not, and cannot be. If human transactions which have wealth for their object are vast enough, complicated enough, to afford materials for a special science, leave to it its own attractions, such as they are, and don't force it to speak of men's Interests in the language of Sentiment. For my own part, I believe that little good has been effected of late in exacting from writers on Political Economy a tone of enthusiastic sentimentality which in their mouth can only be declamation. Of what do they treat? Of

transactions which take place between people who know nothing of each other, who owe each other nothing but common Justice, who seek to defend or advance certain interests. It has to do with claims and pretensions which limit and restrain each other, and with which disinterestedness and devotion have nothing to do. Take a lyre, and chant such themes! As well might Lamartine sing his odes with the aid of the logarithm tables.

Not that Political Economy is without its poetry. There is poetry wherever order and harmony exist. But it is in the results, not in the demonstrations. It is brought out, not created. Keppler did not give himself out as a poet, and yet the laws which he discovered are the true poetry of mind.

Thus, Political Economy regards man only in one aspect, and our first care must be to study man in that point of view. This is the reason why we cannot avoid going back to the primary phenomena of human *Sensibility* and *Activity*. Start not, gentle reader! We shall not detain you long in those cloudy regions of metaphysics, and we shall borrow from that science only such notions as are clear, simple, and, if possible, incontestable.

The soul, or (to get rid of the spiritual question) man, is endued with *Sensibility*. Let this sensibility be either in the soul or in the body, man, as a *passive* being, always experiences *sensations* either painful or agreeable. As an *active* being, he makes an effort to drive away the one set of sensations and to multiply the other. The result, which affects him again as a *passive* being, may be called *Satisfaction*.

The general idea of *Sensibility* springs from other ideas which are more precise: pain, want, desire, taste, appetite, on one side; and, on the other, pleasure, enjoyment, competence.

Between these two extremes a middle term is interposed, and from the general idea of *Activity* spring the more precise ideas of pain, effort, fatigue, labour, production.

In analyzing *Sensibility* and *Activity* we encounter a word common to both; the word *Pain*. To experience certain sensations is a *pain*, and we cannot put an end to it but by an effort, which is also a *pain*. We *feel pains;* we *take pains*. This advertises us that here below we have only a choice of evils.

In the aggregate of these phenomena all is *personal*, as well the Sensation which precedes the effort, as the Satisfaction which follows it.

We cannot doubt, then, that *Personal interest* is the great main-

spring of human nature. It must be perfectly understood, however, that this term is here employed as the expression of a universal fact, incontestable, and resulting from the organization of man,—and not of a critical judgment on his conduct and actions, as if, instead of it, we should employ the word *egotism*. Moral science would be rendered impossible, if we were to pervert beforehand the terms of which it is compelled to make use.

Human effort does not always come necessarily to place itself between the sensation and the satisfaction. Sometimes the satisfaction comes of its own accord. More frequently the effort is exercised upon *materials*, by the intervention of *forces* which nature has placed gratuitously at our disposal.

If we give the name of *Utility* to all which effects the satisfaction of wants, there are, then, utilities of two kinds:—one, vouchsafed to us gratuitously by Providence; the other (if I may use the expression), requiring to be purchased by an *Effort*.

Thus the complete evolution embraces, or may embrace, these four ideas:—

$$\text{Wants} \left\{ \begin{matrix} \text{Gratuitous Utility} \\ \text{Onerous Utility} \end{matrix} \right\} \text{Satisfaction.}$$

Man is endued with progressive faculties. He compares, he foresees, he learns, he reforms himself, by experience. If want is a *pain*, effort is a *pain* also, and there is therefore no reason why he should not seek to diminish the latter, when he can do so without diminishing the satisfaction, which is his ultimate object. This is the reason of his success when he comes to replace *onerous* by *gratuitous Utility*, which is the perpetual object of his search.

It follows from the *interested* nature of the human heart, that we constantly seek to increase the proportion which our Satisfactions bear to our Efforts; and it results from the intelligent nature of our mind that we manage at each step to augment the proportion which gratuitous bears to onerous Utility.

Every time a success of this nature is achieved, a part of our efforts is, so to speak, rendered disposable, and we have the option of either indulging ourselves with longer repose, or of working for the satisfaction of new desires, if these are strong enough to stimulate our activity.

Such is the principle of all economic progress; and it is easy to see that it is the principle also of all deception; for progress and error have both their root in that marvellous gift of God to man—*Free will*.

We are endued with the faculty of comparing, of judging, of choosing, and of acting in consequence; which implies that we may form a right or a wrong judgment, and make a good or a bad choice. It is never useless to remind men of this when they talk of Liberty.

We never deceive ourselves, it is true, regarding the particular nature of our sensations, and we discern with an infallible instinct whether they are painful or agreeable. But how many various forms may our errors take! We may be labouring under a mistake as to the cause, and pursue with ardour, as likely to afford us enjoyment, what can only inflict pain upon us; or we may be mistaken as to the chain of consequences, and be ignorant that an immediate satisfaction will be followed by greater ulterior pain; or, again, we may mistake the relative importance of our wants and our desires.

Not only may we thus give a false direction to our efforts through ignorance, but also through a perverse will. "Man," says M. Bonald, "is an intelligence served by organs." What! is there nothing else in us? Have we no passions?

When we speak of harmony, then, we must not be understood to mean that the natural arrangement of the social world is such that error and vice have been excluded from it. To maintain that thesis in the face of plain facts would be to carry the love of system to madness. To have harmony without dissonance man must either be devoid of free will or he must be infallible. All we say is this, that the great social tendencies are harmonious, inasmuch as—all error leading to deception and all vice to chastisement—the dissonances have a continual tendency to disappear.

A first and vague notion of property may be deduced from these premises. Since it is the individual who experiences the sensation, the desire, the want,—since it is he who makes the *Effort*,—the satisfaction must necessarily redound to him, for otherwise the effort would be without cause or reason.

The same may be said of *Inheritance*. No theory, no declamation, is required in order to make fathers love their children. People who sit down to manufacture imaginary societies may think it strange, but it is so;—a father makes as many *Efforts* for the *satisfaction* of his children as for his own. Perhaps he makes more. If, then, an unnatural law should interdict the transmission of property, not only would that law violate property by the very

act, but it would hinder its formation by abandoning to inaction one-half at least of our *Efforts*.

We shall have occasion to return to the subjects of Personal interest, Property, and Inheritance. Let us, in the first instance, mark out the limits of the science with which we have more immediately to do.

I am not one of those who think that a science, as such, has natural and unalterable boundaries. In the domain of ideas, as in that of facts, all things are bound up and linked together; truths run into one another; and there is no science which, in order to be complete, might not be made to include all. It has been said with reason that to an infinite intelligence there is but a single verity. It is, then, our weakness which obliges us to study separately a certain order of phenomena, and the classifications which result from it cannot escape a certain degree of arbitrariness.

The true merit is to explain accurately the facts, their causes, and their consequences. It is also a merit, although a much less and a purely relative one, to determine, not rigorously—for that is impossible—but rationally, the order of the facts which we propose to study.

I say this in order that it may not be supposed that I intend to criticise my predecessors in giving to Political Economy limits somewhat different from those which they have assigned to that science.

Economists have of late been reproached with addicting themselves too much to the study of *Wealth*. It has been wished that they had found a place in their science for all that, directly or indirectly, contributes to the happiness or sufferings of humanity. They have even been supposed to deny everything which they did not profess to teach—for example, the phenomena of sympathy, which is as natural to the heart of man as the principle of self-interest. It is as if they accused the mineralogist of denying the existence of the animal kingdom. What! Wealth, the laws of its production, of its distribution, of its consumption,—is not this a subject vast enough, and important enough, to be made the object of a special science? If the conclusions of the Economist were at variance with those of morals and politics, I could conceive ground for the accusation. One might say to him, "In limiting your science you are mistaken, for it is not possible for two verities to run counter to each other." Perhaps one result of the work which I now submit to the public may be, that the Science

of Wealth will be found to be in perfect harmony with all the other sciences.

Of the three terms comprehended in the human destinies—Sensation, Effort, Satisfaction—the first and the last are always and necessarily confounded in the same individuality. It is impossible to imagine them separated. We can conceive a sensation unsatisfied, a want unappeased, but it is quite impossible to suppose the *want* to be in one man and the *satisfaction* to be in another.

If the same observation applied to the middle term, *Effort*, man would be a being completely solitary. The Economic phenomena would then manifest themselves in an isolated individual. There might be a juxtaposition of persons, but there could be no society; there might be a Personal, but not a Political, Economy.

But it is not so. It is very possible, and very often happens, that the *wants* of one owe their *satisfaction* to the *efforts* of another. This is a fact. If any one of us were to pass in review all the satisfactions he enjoys, he would acknowledge that he owes them chiefly to efforts which he has not himself made; and in the same way, the labour which we undergo, each in his own profession, goes almost always to satisfy the desires of others.

This tells us, that it is neither in the wants nor in the satisfactions (phenomena essentially personal and intransmissible), but in the nature of the mean term, *human Efforts*, that we must search for the *social* principle—the origin of Political Economy.

It is in fact to this faculty, given to men, and to men alone, among all creatures, to *work the one for the other;* it is this transmission of efforts, this exchange of services, with all the infinite and involved combinations to which it gives rise, through time and through space, it is THIS precisely which constitutes Economic Science, points out its origin, and determines its limits.

I, say, then:

Every effort, capable of satisfying, on condition of a return, the wants of a person other than the man who makes the effort, and consequently the wants and satisfactions relative to this species of effort, constitute the domain of Political Economy.

Thus, to give an example: the act of breathing, although it includes the three terms which constitute the Economic phenomenon, does not pertain to that science, and we see the reason. What we have here to do with is a series of facts, of which not only the two extremes—want and satisfaction—are incapable of trans-

mission (they are always so); but the mean term, *Effort*, is also incapable of transmission. To enable us to respire we invoke the assistance of no one; in that there is neither a service to be received nor a service to render. The fact is in its nature individual, not *social*, and consequently cannot enter into a science which is essentially one of relation, as its very name indicates.

But if, in peculiar circumstances, people were to render each other assistance to enable them to breathe, as when a workman descends in a diving-bell, when a physician treats a patient for pulmonary complaints, or when the police take measures for purifying the air, in such cases there is a want satisfied by a person other than the person who experiences the want; there is a service rendered; and respiration itself, as far at least as concerns assistance and remuneration, is brought within the sphere of Political Economy.

It is not necessary that the transaction should be completed, it is sufficient that it is possible, in order to impart to the *labour* employed an *economic* character. The labourer who raises corn for his own use accomplishes an economic fact in this respect that the corn is capable of being exchanged.

To make an effort in order to satisfy another's wants is to render him a *service*. If a service is stipulated in return, there is an exchange of *services;* and as this is the most ordinary case, Political Economy may be defined *the theory of Exchange.*

Whatever may be for one of the contracting parties the urgency of the want, or for the other the intensity of the effort, if the exchange is free, the two services exchanged are *worth each other.* Value, then, consists in the comparative appreciation of reciprocal *services*, and Political Economy again may be defined *the theory of Value.*

I have just defined Political Economy, and marked out its domain, without mentioning an essential element, *gratuitous Utility.*

All authors have remarked that we derive a multitude of satisfactions from this source. They denominate these utilities, such as air, water, the light of the sun, &c., *natural wealth*, in contradistinction to *social wealth*, and having done so, they take no more notice of them; and in fact it would seem that, as they give rise to no effort, to no exchange, to no service, as (being destitute of value) they figure in no inventory of goods, they should not be admitted into the domain of Political Economy.

This exclusion would be rational if *gratuitous* utility were a

fixed invariable quantity, always separated from *onerous* utility; but they are constantly mixed up, and in inverse proportions. Man's constant endeavour is to substitute the one for the other, that is to say, to arrive, by means of natural and gratuitous agents, at the same results as by efforts. He accomplishes by the wind, by gravitation, by heat, by the elasticity of the air, what he accomplished at first only by muscular exertion.

Now what happens? Although the effect is equally useful, the effort is less. Less effort implies less service, and less service implies less value. Each step of progress, then, annihilates value; but how? Not by suppressing the useful effect, but by substituting gratuitous for onerous utility, natural for social wealth. In one sense the portion of value thus annihilated is excluded from the domain of Political Economy, just as it is excluded from our inventories. It is no longer exchanged, bought, or sold, and mankind enjoy it without effort and almost without consciousness. It is no longer accounted relative wealth, but is ranked among the gifts of God.

But, on the other hand, if science takes it no longer into account, the error is assuredly committed of losing sight of what under all circumstances is the main, the essential thing—the result, the *useful effect*. In that case we overlook the strongest tendencies towards community and equality, and discover much less of harmony in the social order. If this book is destined to advance Political Economy a single step, it will be by keeping constantly before the eyes of the reader that portion of *value* which is successively annihilated, and recovered, under the form of *gratuitous utility*, by mankind at large.

I shall here make an observation which will prove how frequently the sciences unite and nearly run into each other.

I have just defined *service*. It is the *effort* in one man, while the *want* and the *satisfaction* are in another. Sometimes the service is rendered gratuitously, without remuneration, without any service being exacted in return. It proceeds, then, from the principle of sympathy rather than from the principle of self-interest. It constitutes gift, not exchange. Consequently it would seem to appertain not to Political Economy (which is the theory of exchange), but to morals. In fact, acts of that nature, by reason of their motive, are rather moral than economical. We shall see, however, that, by reason of their effects, they concern the science which now engages us. On the other hand, services rendered for

an onerous consideration, on condition of a return, and, by reason of that motive (essentially economic), do not on that account remain excluded from the domain of morals, in so far as their effects are concerned.

Thus these two branches of knowledge have an infinite number of points of contact; and as two truths cannot be antagonistic, when the economist ascribes to a phenomenon injurious consequences, and the moralist ascribes to it beneficial effects, we may affirm that one or other of them is mistaken. It is thus that the sciences verify and fortify one another.

III.

WANTS OF MAN.

It is perhaps impossible, and, at any rate, it would not be of much use, to present a complete and methodical catalogue of human wants. Nearly all those which are of real importance are comprised in the following enumeration:—

Respiration (I retain here that want, as marking the boundary where the transmission of labour or exchange of services begins)—Food—Clothing—Lodging—Preservation or re-establishment of Health—Locomotion—Security—Instruction—Diversion—Sense of the beautiful.

Wants exist. This is a fact. It would be puerile to inquire whether we should have been better without wants, and why God has made us subject to them.

It is certain that man *suffers*, and even dies, when he cannot satisfy the wants which belong to his organization. It is certain that he *suffers*, and may even die, when in satisfying certain of his wants he indulges to excess.

We cannot satisfy the greater part of our wants without pain or trouble, which may be considered as *suffering*. The same may be said of the act by which, exercising a noble control over our appetites, we impose on ourselves a privation.

Thus, *suffering* is inevitable, and there remains to us only a choice of evils. Nothing comes more home to us than suffering, and hence *personal interest*—the sentiment which is branded now-a-days with the names of egotism and individualism—is indestructible. Nature has placed *sensibility* at the extremity of our nerves, and at all the avenues to the heart and mind, as an advanced guard, to give us notice when our satisfactions are either defective or in excess. Pain has, then, a purpose, a mission. We are asked frequently, whether the existence of evil can be reconciled with the infinite goodness of the Creator—a formidable

problem that philosophy will always discuss, and never probably be able to solve. As far as Political Economy is concerned, we must take man as he is, inasmuch as it is not given to imagination to figure to itself—far less can the reason conceive—a sentient and mortal being exempt from pain. We should try in vain to comprehend sensibility without pain, or man without sensibility.

In our days, certain sentimentalist schools reject as false all social science which does not go the length of establishing a system by means of which suffering may be banished from the world. They pass a severe judgment on Political Economy because it admits, what it is impossible to deny, the existence of suffering. They go farther—they make Political Economy responsible for it. It is as if they were to attribute the frailty of our organs to the physiologist who makes them the object of his study.

Undoubtedly we may acquire a temporary popularity, attract the regards of suffering classes, and irritate them against the natural order of society, by telling them that we have in our head a plan of artificial social arrangement which excludes pain in every form. We may even pretend to appropriate God's secret, and to interpret his presumed will, by banishing evil from the world. And there will not be wanting those who will treat as *impious* a science which exposes such pretensions, and who will accuse it of overlooking or denying the foresight of the Author of things.

These schools, at the same time, give us a frightful picture of the actual state of society, not perceiving that if it be *impious* to foresee suffering in the future, it is equally so to expose its existence in the past or in the present. For the infinite admits of no limits; and if a single human being has since the creation experienced suffering, that fact would entitle us to admit, without *impiety*, that suffering has entered into the plan of Providence.

Surely it is more philosophical and more manly to acknowledge at once great natural facts which not only exist, but apart from which we can form no just or adequate conception of human nature.

Man, then, is subject to suffering, and consequently society is also subject to it.

Suffering discharges a function in the individual, and consequently in society.

An accurate investigation of the social laws discloses to us that the mission of suffering is gradually to destroy its own causes, to

circumscribe suffering itself within narrower limits, and finally to assure the preponderance of the Good and the Fair, by enabling us to purchase or merit that preponderance.

The nomenclature we have proposed places material wants in the foreground.

The times in which we live force me to put the reader on his guard against a species of sentimental affectation which is now much in vogue.

There are people who hold very cheap what they disdainfully term *material wants, material satisfactions:* they will say, as Belise says to Chrysale,

> "Le corps, cette guenille, est-il d'une importance,
> D'un prix à mériter seulement qu'on y pense?"

And although, in general, pretty well off themselves, they will blame me for having indicated as one of our most pressing wants, that of *food*, for example.

I acknowledge undoubtedly that moral advancement is a higher thing than physical sustenance. But are we so stuffed with declamatory affectation that we can no longer venture to say, that before we can set about moral culture, we must have the means of living. Let us guard ourselves against these puerilities, which obstruct science. In wishing to pass for philanthropical we cease to be truthful; for it is contrary both to reason and to fact to represent moral development, self-respect, the cultivation of refined sentiments, as preceding the requirements of simple preservation. This sort of prudery is quite modern. Rousseau, that enthusiastic panegyrist of the *State of Nature*, steered clear of it; and a man endued with exquisite delicacy, of a tenderness of heart full of unction, a spiritualist even to quietism, and, towards himself, a stoic—I mean Fénélon—has said that, "After all, solidity of mind consists in the desire to be exactly instructed as to how those things are managed which lie at the foundation of human life—all great affairs turn upon that."

Without pretending, then, to classify our wants in a rigorously exact order, we may say, that man cannot direct his efforts to the satisfaction of moral wants of the highest and most elevated kind until after he has provided for those which concern his preservation and sustenance. Whence, without going farther, we may conclude that every legislative measure which tells against the material well-being of communities injures the moral life of nations,—a *harmony* which I commend, in passing, to the attention of the reader.

And since the occasion presents itself, I will here mark another.

Since the inexorable necessities of material life are an obstacle to moral and intellectual culture, it follows that we ought to find more virtue among wealthy than among poor nations and classes. Good Heaven! what have I just said, and with what clamour shall I be assailed! But the truth is, it is a perfect mania of our times to attribute all disinterestedness, all self-sacrifice, all which constitutes the greatness and moral beauty of man, to the poorer classes, and this mania has of late been still more developed by a revolution, which, bringing these classes to the surface of society, has not failed to surround them with a crowd of flatterers.

I don't deny that wealth, opulence, especially where it is very unequally spread, tends to develop certain special vices.

But is it possible to admit as a general proposition that virtue is the privilege of poverty, and vice the unhappy and unfailing companion of ease? This would be to affirm that moral and intellectual improvement, which is only compatible with a certain amount of leisure and comfort, is detrimental to intelligence and morality.

I appeal to the candour of the suffering classes themselves. To what horrible *dissonances* would such a paradox conduct us!

We must then conclude, that human nature has the frightful alternative presented to it, either to remain eternally wretched, or advance gradually on the road to vice and immorality. Then all the forces which conduct us to wealth—such as, activity, economy, skill, honesty—are the seeds of vice; while those which tie us to poverty—improvidence, idleness, dissipation, carelessness—are the precious germs of virtue. Could we conceive in the moral world a dissonance more discouraging? Or, were it really so, who would dare to address or counsel the people? You complain of your sufferings (we must say to them), and you are impatient to see an end of these sufferings. You groan at finding yourselves under the yoke of the most imperious material wants, and you sigh for the hour of your deliverance, for you desire leisure to make your voice heard in the political world and to protect your interests. You know not what you desire, or how fatal success would prove to you. Ease, competence, riches, develop only vice. Guard, then, religiously your poverty and your virtue.

The flatterers of the people, then, fall into a manifest contradiction when they point to the region of opulence as an impure sink of egotism and vice, and, at the same time, urge them on—and

clothed than he wishes to be decorated, scarcely has he satisfied his bodily cravings than study, science, art, open to his desires an unlimited field.

It is a phenomenon well worthy of remark, how quickly, by continuous satisfaction, what was at first only a vague desire becomes a taste, and what was only a taste is transformed into a want, and even a want of the most imperious kind.

Look at that rude artisan. Accustomed to poor fare, plain clothing, indifferent lodging, he imagines he would be the happiest of men, and would have no farther desires, if he could but reach the step of the ladder immediately above him. He is astonished that those who have already reached it should still torment themselves as they do. At length comes the modest fortune he has dreamt of, and then he is happy, very happy—for a few days.

For soon he becomes familiar with his new situation, and by degrees he ceases to feel his fancied happiness. With indifference he puts on the fine clothing after which he sighed. He has got into a new circle, he associates with other companions, he drinks of another cup, he aspires to mount another step, and if he ever turns his reflections at all upon himself, he feels that if his fortune has changed, his soul remains the same, and is still an inexhaustible spring of new desires.

It would seem that nature has attached this singular power to *habit*, in order that it should be in us what a rochet-wheel is in mechanics, and that humanity, urged on continually to higher and higher regions, should not be able to rest content, whatever degree of civilisation it attains to.

The *sense of dignity*, the feeling of self-respect, acts with perhaps still more force in the same direction. The stoic philosophy has frequently blamed men for desiring rather to *appear* than to *be*. But, taking a broader view of things, is it certain that to *appear* is not for man one of the modes of *being?*

When, by exertion, order, and economy, a family rises by degrees towards those social regions where tastes become nicer and more delicate, relations more polished, sentiments more refined, intelligence more cultivated, who can describe the acute suffering which accompanies a forced return to their former low estate? The body does not alone suffer. The sad reverse interferes with habits which have become as it were a second nature; it clashes with the sense of dignity, and all the feelings of the soul. It is by no means

uncommon in such a case to see the victim sink all at once into degrading sottishness, or perish in despair. It is with the social medium as with the atmosphere. The mountaineer, accustomed to the pure air of his native hills, pines and moulders away in the narrow streets of our cities.

But I hear some one exclaim, Economist, you stumble already. You have just told us that your science is in accord with morals, and here you are justifying luxury and effeminacy. Philosopher, I say in my turn, lay aside these fine clothes, which were not those of primitive man, break your furniture, burn your books, dine on raw flesh, and I shall then reply to your objection. It is too much to quarrel with this power of habit, of which you are yourself the living example.

We may find fault with this disposition which nature has given to our organs; but our censure will not make it the less universal. We find it existing among all nations, ancient and modern, savage and civilized, at the antipodes as at home. We cannot explain civilisation without it; and when a disposition of the human heart is thus proved to be universal and indestructible, social science cannot put it aside, or refuse to take it into account.

This objection will be made by publicists who pride themselves on being the disciples of Rousseau; but Rousseau has never denied the existence of the phenomenon. He establishes undeniably the indefinite elasticity of human wants, and the power of habit, and admits even the part which I assign to them in preventing the human race from retrograding; only, that which I admire is what he deplores, and he does so consistently. Rousseau fancied there was a time when men had neither rights, nor duties, nor relations, nor affections, nor language; and it was then, according to him, that they were happy and perfect. He was bound, therefore, to abhor the social machinery which is constantly removing mankind from ideal perfection. Those, on the contrary, who are of opinion that perfection is not at the beginning, but at the end, of the human evolution, will admire the spring and motive of action which I place in the foreground. But as to the existence and play of the spring itself we are at one.

"Men of leisure," he says, "employed themselves in procuring all sorts of conveniences and accommodations unknown to their forefathers, and that was the first yoke which, without intending it, they imposed upon themselves, and the prime source of the inconveniences which they prepared for their descendants. For,

not only did they thus continue to emasculate both mind and body, but these luxuries having *by habit* lost all their relish, and degenerated into *true wants*, their being deprived of them caused more pain than the possession of them had given pleasure: they were unhappy at losing what they had no enjoyment in possessing."

Rousseau was convinced that God, nature, and humanity were wrong. That is still the opinion of many; but it is not mine.

After all, God forbid that I should desire to set myself against the noblest attribute, the most beautiful virtue of man, self-control, command over his passions, moderation in his desires, contempt of show. I don't say that he is to make himself a slave to this or that factitious want. I say that wants (taking a broad and general view of them as resulting from man's mental and bodily constitution), combined with the power of habit, and the sense of dignity, are indefinitely expansible, because they spring from an inexhaustible source—namely, desire. Who should blame a rich man for being sober, for despising finery, for avoiding pomp and effeminacy? But are there not more elevated desires to which he may yield? Has the desire for instruction, for instance, any limits? To render service to his country, to encourage the arts, to disseminate useful ideas, to succour the distressed,—is there anything in these incompatible with the right use of riches?

For the rest, whatever philosophers may think of it, human wants do not constitute a fixed immutable quantity. That is a certain, a universal fact, liable to no exception. The wants of the fourteenth century, whether with reference to food, or lodging, or instruction, were not at all the wants of ours, and we may safely predict that ours will not be the wants of our descendants.

The same observation applies to all the elements of Political Economy—Wealth, Labour, Value, Services, &c.—all participate in the extreme versatility of the principal subject, Man. Political Economy has not, like geometry or physics, the advantage of dealing with objects which can be weighed or measured. This is one of its difficulties to begin with, and it is a perpetual source of errors throughout; for when the human mind applies itself to a certain order of phenomena, it is naturally on the outlook for a *criterion*, a common measure, to which everything can be referred, in order to give to that particular branch of knowledge the character of an *exact science*. Thus we observe some authors seeking for fixity in *value*, others in *money*, others in *corn*, others in *labour*,

that is to say, in things which are themselves all liable to fluctuation.

Many errors in Political Economy proceed from authors thus regarding human wants as a fixed determinate quantity; and it is for this reason that I have deemed it my duty to enlarge on this subject. At the risk of anticipating, it is worth while to notice briefly this mode of reasoning. Economists take generally the enjoyments which satisfy men of the present day, and they assume that human nature admits of no other. Hence, if the bounty of nature, or the power of machinery, or habits of temperance and moderation, succeed in rendering disposable for a time a portion of human labour, this progress disquiets them, they consider it as a disaster, and they retreat behind absurd but specious formulas, such as these: *Production is superabundant,—we suffer from plethora,—the power of producing outruns the power of consuming*, &c.

It is not possible to discover a solution of the question of *machinery*, or that of *external competition*, or that of *luxury*, if we persist in considering our *wants* as a fixed invariable quantity, and do not take into account their indefinite expansibility.

But if human *wants* are indefinite, progressive, capable of increase, like desire, which is their never failing source, we must admit, under pain of introducing discordance and contradiction into the economical laws of society, that nature has placed in man and around him indefinite and progressive means of *satisfaction*;—equilibrium between the means and the end being the primary condition of all harmony. This is what we shall now examine.

I said at the outset of this work that the object of Political Economy is *man*, considered with reference to his wants, and his means of satisfying these wants.

We must then begin with the study of man and his organization.

But we have also seen that he is not a solitary being. If his *wants* and his *satisfactions* are, from the very nature of sensibility, inseparable from his being, the same thing cannot be said of his *efforts*, which spring from the active principle. The latter are susceptible of transmission. In a word, men work for one another.

Now a very strange thing takes place.

If we take a general, or, if I may be allowed the expression, abstract view, of man, his wants, his efforts, his satisfactions, his

constitution, his inclinations, his tendencies, we fall into a train of observation which appears free from doubt and self-evident,—so much so, that the writer finds a difficulty in submitting to the public judgment truths so vulgar and so palpable. He is afraid of provoking ridicule; and thinks, not without reason, that the impatient reader will throw away his book, exclaiming, "I shall not waste time on such trivialities."

And yet these truths which, when presented to us in an abstract shape, we regard as so incontrovertible that we can scarce summon patience to listen to them, are considered only as ridiculous errors and absurd theories the moment they are applied to man in his social state. Regarding man as an isolated being, who ever took it into his head to say, "Production is superabundant—the power of consumption cannot keep pace with the power of production—luxury and factitious tastes are the source of wealth—the invention of machinery annihilates labour," and other apophthegms of the same sort,—which, nevertheless, when applied to mankind in the aggregate, we receive as axioms so well established that they are actually made the basis of our commercial and industrial legislation? *Exchange* produces in this respect an illusion of which even men of penetration and solid judgment find it impossible to disabuse themselves, and I affirm that Political Economy will have attained its design, and fulfilled its mission, when it shall have conclusively demonstrated this:—that what is true of an individual man is true of society at large. Man in an isolated state is at once producer and consumer, inventor and projector, capitalist and workman. All the economic phenomena are accomplished in his person—he is, as it were, society in miniature. In like manner, humanity, viewed in the aggregate, may be regarded as a great, collective, complex individual, to whom you may apply exactly the same truths as to man in a state of isolation.

I have felt it necessary to make this remark, which I hope will be justified in the sequel, before continuing what I had to say upon man. I should have been afraid, otherwise, that the reader might reject, as superfluous, the following developments, which in fact are nothing else than veritable *truisms*.

I have just spoken of the *wants* of man, and after presenting an approximate enumeration of them, I observed that they were not of a stationary, but of a progressive nature; and this holds true, whether we consider these wants each singly, or all together, in their physical, intellectual, and moral order. How could it be

otherwise? There are wants the satisfaction of which is exacted by our organization under pain of death, and up to a certain point we may represent these as fixed quantities, although that is not rigorously exact, for however little we may desire to neglect an essential element—namely, the *force of habit*—however little we may condescend to subject ourselves to honest self-examination, we shall be forced to allow that wants, even of the plainest and most homely kind (the desire for food for example), undergo, under the influence of habit, undoubted transformations. The man who declaims against this observation as materialist and epicurean, would think himself very unfortunate, if, taking him at his word, we should reduce him to the black broth of the Spartans, or the scanty pittance of an anchorite. At all events, when wants of this kind have been satisfied in an assured and permanent way, there are others which take their rise in the most expansible of our faculties, desire. Can we conceive a time when man can no longer form even reasonable desires? Let us not forget that a desire which might be unreasonable in a former state of civilisation —at a time when all the human faculties were absorbed in providing for low material wants—ceases to be so when improvement opens to these faculties a more extended field. A desire to travel at the rate of thirty miles an hour would have been unreasonable two centuries ago—it is not so at the present day. To pretend that the wants and desires of man are fixed and stationary quantities, is to mistake the nature of the human soul, to deny facts, and to render civilisation inexplicable.

It would still be inexplicable if, side by side with the indefinite development of wants, there had not been placed, as possible, the indefinite development of the means of providing for these wants. How could the expansible nature of our wants have contributed to the realization of progress, if, at a certain point, our faculties could advance no farther, and should encounter an impassable barrier?

Our wants being indefinite, the presumption is that the means of satisfying these wants should be indefinite also, unless we are to suppose Nature, Providence, or the Power which presides over our destinies, to have fallen into a cruel and shocking contradiction.

I say indefinite, not infinite, for nothing connected with man is infinite. It is precisely because our faculties go on developing themselves *ad infinitum*, that they have no assignable limits,

although they may have absolute limits. There are many points above the present range of humanity, which we may never succeed in attaining, and yet for all that, the time may never come when we shall cease to approach nearer them.*

I don't at all mean to say that *desire*, and the *means* of satisfying desire, march in parallel lines and with equal rapidity. The former runs—the latter limps after it.

The prompt and adventurous nature of desire, compared with the slowness of our faculties, shews us very clearly that in every stage of civilisation, at every step of our progress, suffering to a certain extent is, and ever must be, the lot of man. But it shews us likewise that this suffering has a mission, for desire could no longer be an incentive to our faculties if it followed, in place of preceding, their exercise. Let us not, however, accuse nature of cruelty in the construction of this mechanism, for we cannot fail to remark that desire is never transformed into want, strictly so called, that is, into *painful desire*, until it has been made such by *habit;* in other words, until the *means* of satisfying the desire have been found and placed irrevocably within our reach.†

We have now to examine the question,—What means have we of providing for our wants?

It seems evident to me that there are two—namely, Nature and Labour, the gifts of God, and the fruits of our efforts—or, if you will, the application of our faculties to the things which nature has placed at our service.

No school that I know of has attributed the satisfaction of our wants to nature *alone*. Such an assertion is clearly contradicted by experience, and we need not learn Political Economy to perceive that the intervention of our *faculties* is necessary.

But there are schools who have attributed this privilege to labour alone. Their axiom is, "All wealth comes from labour—labour is wealth."

I cannot help anticipating, so far as to remark, that these formulas, taken literally, have led to monstrous errors of doctrine,

* A mathematical law of frequent occurrence, but very little understood in Political Economy.

† One of the indirect objects of this work is to combat modern sentimental schools, who, in spite of facts, refuse to admit that suffering to any extent enters into the designs of Providence. As these schools are said to proceed from Rousseau, I must here cite to them a passage from their master: "The evil which we see is not absolute evil; and far from being directly antagonistic to the good, it concurs with it in the universal harmony."

and, consequently, to deplorable legislative blunders. I shall return to this subject. I confine myself here to establishing, as a fact, that *Nature* and *Labour* co-operate for the satisfaction of our wants and desires.

Let us examine the facts.

The first want which we have placed at the head of our list is that of *breathing*. As regards respiration, we have already shewn that *nature* in general is at the whole cost, and that human *labour* intervenes only in certain exceptional cases, as where it becomes necessary to purify the atmosphere.

Another want is that of quenching our *thirst*, and it is more or less satisfied by Nature, in as far as she furnishes us with water, more or less pure, abundant, and within reach; and Labour concurs in as far as it becomes necessary to bring water from a greater distance, to filter it, or to obviate its scarcity by constructing wells and cisterns.

The liberality of nature towards us in regard to *food* is by no means uniform; for who will maintain, that the labour to be furnished is the same when the land is fertile, or when it is sterile, when the forest abounds with game, the river with fish, or in the opposite cases?

As regards *lighting*, human labour has certainly less to do when the night is short than when it is long.

I dare not lay it down as an absolute rule, but it appears to me that in proportion as we rise in the scale of wants, the co-operation of nature is lessened, and leaves us more room for the exercise of our faculties. The painter, the sculptor, and the author even, are forced to avail themselves of materials and instruments which nature alone furnishes, but from their own genius is derived all that makes the charm, the merit, the utility, and the value of their works. *To learn* is a want which the well-directed exercise of our faculties almost alone can satisfy. Yet here *nature* assists, by presenting to us in divers degrees objects of observation and comparison. With an equal amount of application, may not botany, geology, or natural history, make everywhere equal progress?

It would be superfluous to cite other examples. We have already shown undeniably that Nature gives us the means of satisfaction, in placing at our disposal things possessed of higher or lower degrees of *utility* (I use the word in its etymological sense, as indicating the *property of serving*, of being *useful*). In many cases, in almost every case, labour must contribute, to a certain

extent, in rendering this *utility* complete; and we can easily comprehend that the part which labour has to perform is greater or less in proportion as nature had previously advanced the operation in a less or greater degree.

We may then lay down these two formulas:

1. *Utility is communicated sometimes by Nature alone, sometimes by Labour alone, but almost always by the co-operation of both.*

2. *To bring anything to its highest degree of* UTILITY, *the action of Labour is in an inverse ratio to the action of Nature.*

From these two propositions, combined with what I have said of the indefinite expansibility of our wants, I may be permitted to deduce a conclusion, the importance of which will be demonstrated in the sequel. Suppose two men, having no connexion with each other, to be unequally situated in this respect, that nature had been liberal to the one, and niggardly to the other; the first would evidently obtain a given amount of satisfaction at a less expense of labour. Would it follow that the part of his forces thus left *disposable*, if I may use the expression, would be abandoned to inaction? and that this man, on account of the liberality of nature, would be reduced to compulsory idleness? Not at all. It would follow that he could, if he wished it, dispose of these forces to enlarge the circle of his enjoyments; that with an equal amount of labour he could procure two satisfactions in place of one; in a word, that his progress would become more easy.

I may be mistaken, but it appears to me that no science, not even geometry, is founded on truths more unassailable. Were any one to prove to me that all these truths were so many errors, I should not only lose confidence in them, but all faith in evidence itself; for what reasoning could one employ which should better deserve the acquiescence of our judgment than the evidence thus overturned? The moment an axiom is discovered which shall contradict this other axiom—that a straight line is the shortest road from one point to another—that instant the human mind has no other refuge, if it be a refuge, than absolute scepticism.

I positively feel ashamed thus to insist upon first principles which are so plain as to seem puerile. And yet we must confess that, amid the complications of human transactions, such simple truths have been overlooked; and in order to justify myself for detaining the reader so long upon what the English call *truisms*, I shall notice here a singular error by which excellent minds have allowed themselves to be misled. Setting aside, neglecting en-

tirely, the *co-operation of nature* in relation to the satisfaction of our wants, they have laid down the absolute principle that *all wealth comes from labour.* On this foundation they have reared the following erroneous syllogism:

"All wealth comes from labour:

"Wealth, then, is in proportion to labour.

"But labour is in an inverse ratio to the liberality of nature:

"*Ergo*, wealth is inversely as the liberality of nature."

Right or wrong, many economical laws owe their origin to this singular reasoning. Such laws cannot be otherwise than subversive of every sound principle in relation to the development and distribution of wealth; and this it is which justifies me in preparing beforehand, by the explanation of truths very trivial in appearance, for the refutation of the deplorable errors and prejudices under which society is now labouring.

Let us analyze the co-operation of Nature of which I have spoken. Nature places two things at our disposal—*materials* and *forces.*

Most of the material objects which contribute to the satisfaction of our wants and desires are brought into the state of *utility* which renders them fit for our use only by the intervention of labour, by the application of the human faculties. But the elements, the atoms, if you will, of which these objects are composed, are the gifts, I will add the *gratuitous* gifts, of nature. This observation is of the very highest importance, and will, I believe, throw a new light upon the theory of wealth.

The reader will have the goodness to bear in mind that I am inquiring at present in a general way into the moral and physical constitution of man, his wants, his faculties, his relations with nature—apart from the consideration of Exchange, which I shall enter upon in the next chapter. We shall then see in what respect, and in what manner, social transactions modify the phenomena.

It is very evident, that if man in an isolated state must, so to speak, *purchase* the greater part of his satisfactions by an exertion, by an effort, it is rigorously exact to say that prior to the intervention of any such exertion, any such effort, the materials which he finds at his disposal are the *gratuitous* gifts of nature. After the first effort on his part, however slight it may be, they cease to be *gratuitous;* and if the language of Political Economy had been always exact, it would have been to material objects in this state, and before human labour had been bestowed upon

them, that the term *raw materials* (*matières premières*) would have been exclusively applied.

I repeat that this *gratuitous* quality of the gifts of nature, anterior to the intervention of labour, is of the very highest importance. I said in my second chapter that Political Economy was the *theory of value;* I add now, and by anticipation, that things begin to possess *value* only when it is given to them by labour. I intend to demonstrate afterwards that everything which is *gratuitous* for man in an isolated state is gratuitous for man in his social condition, and that the gratuitous gifts of nature, *whatever be their* UTILITY, have no value. I say that a man who receives a benefit from nature, directly and without any effort on his part, cannot be considered as rendering himself an *onerous service*, and, consequently, that he cannot render to another any service with reference to things which are common to all. Now, where there are no services rendered and received there is no *value.*

All that I have said of *materials* is equally applicable to the *forces* which nature places at our disposal. Gravitation, the elasticity of air, the power of the winds, the laws of equilibrium, vegetable life, animal life, are so many forces which we learn to turn to account. The pains and intelligence which we bestow in this way always admit of remuneration, for we are not bound to devote our efforts to the advantage of others gratuitously. But these natural forces, in themselves, and apart from all intellectual or bodily exertion, are *gratuitous* gifts of Providence, and in this respect they remaind estitute of *value* through all the complications of human transactions. This is the leading idea of the present work.

This observation would be of little importance, I allow, if the co-operation of nature were constantly uniform, if each man, at all times, in all places, in all circumstances, received from nature equal and invariable assistance. In that case, science would be justified in not taking into account an element which, remaining always and everywhere the same, would affect the services exchanged in equal proportions on both sides. As in geometry we eliminate portions of lines common to two figures which we compare with each other, we might neglect a co-operation which is invariably present, and content ourselves with saying, as we have done hitherto, "There is such a thing as natural wealth—Political Economy acknowledges it, and has no more concern with it."

But this is not the true state of the matter. The irresistible tendency of the human mind, stimulated by self-interest and

assisted by a series of discoveries, is to substitute natural and gratuitous co-operation for human and onerous concurrence; so that a given utility, although remaining the same as far as the result and the satisfactions which it procures us are concerned, represents a smaller and smaller amount of labour. In fact, it is impossible not to perceive the immense influence of this marvellous phenomenon on our notion of value. For what is the result of it? This, that in every product the *gratuitous* element tends to take the place of the *onerous;* that *utility*, being the result of two *collaborations*, of which one is remunerated and the other is not, Value, which has relation only to the first of these united forces, is diminished, and makes room for a *utility* which is identically the same, and this in proportion as we succeed in constraining nature to a more efficacious co-operation. So that we may say that mankind have as many more *satisfactions*, as much more *wealth*, as they have less *value*. Now the majority of authors having employed these three terms, *utility*, *wealth*, *value*, as synonymous, the result has been a theory which is not only not true, but the reverse of true. I believe sincerely that a more exact description of this combination of natural forces and human forces in the business of production, in other words, a juster definition of Value, would put an end to inextricable theoretical confusion, and would reconcile schools which are now divergent; and if I am now anticipating somewhat in entering on this subject here, my justification with the reader is the necessity of explaining in the outset certain ideas of which otherwise he would have difficulty in perceiving the importance.

Returning from this digression, I resume what I had to say upon man considered exclusively in an economical point of view.

Another observation, which we owe to J. B. Say, and which is almost self-evident, although too much neglected by many authors, is, that man *creates* neither the *materials* nor the *forces* of nature, if we take the word *create* in its exact signification. These materials, these forces, have an independent existence. Man can only combine them or displace them, for his own benefit or that of others. If for his own, *he renders a service to himself*,—if for the benefit of others, *he renders service to his fellows*, and has the right to exact an *equivalent* service. Whence it also follows that *value* is proportional to the service rendered, and not at all to the absolute *utility* of the thing. For this *utility* may be in great part the result of the *gratuitous* action of nature, in which case

the human service, the onerous service, the service to be remunerated, is of little value. This results from the axiom above established—namely, that *to bring a thing to the highest degree of utility, the action of man is inversely as the action of nature.*

This observation overturns the doctrine which places value in the *materiality* of things. The contrary is the truth. The materiality is a quality given by nature, and consequently *gratuitous*, and devoid of *value*, although of incontestable utility. Human action, which can never succeed in *creating* matter, constitutes alone the service which man in a state of isolation renders to himself, or that men in society render to each other; and it is the free appreciation of these *services* which is the foundation of *value*. Far, then, from concluding with Adam Smith that it is impossible to conceive of value otherwise than as residing in material substance, we conclude that between Matter and Value there is no possible relation.

This erroneous doctrine Smith deduced logically from his principle, that those classes alone are *productive* who operate on material substances. He thus prepared the way for the modern error of the *socialists*, who have never done representing as *unproductive* parasites those whom they term *intermediaries* between the producer and consumer—the merchant, the retail dealer, &c. Do they render services? Do they save us trouble by taking trouble for us? In that case they create *value*, although they do not create matter; and as no one can create matter, and we all confine our exertions to rendering reciprocal services, we pronounce with justice that all, including agriculturists and manufacturers, are *intermediaries* in relation one to another.

This is what I had to say at present upon the co-operation of nature. Nature places at our disposal, in various degrees, depending on climate, seasons, and the advance of knowledge, but *always gratuitously*, materials and forces. Then these materials and forces are devoid of *value;* it would be strange if they had any. According to what rule should we estimate them? In what way could nature be paid, remunerated, compensated? We shall see afterwards that *exchange* is necessary in order to determine *value*. We don't purchase the goods of nature—we gather them; and if, in order to appropriate them, a certain amount of effort is necessary, it is in this *effort*, and not in the gifts of nature, that the principle of *value* resides.

Let us now consider that action of man which we designate, in a general way, by the term *labour*.

The word *labour*, like almost all the terms of Political Economy, is very vague. Different authors use it in a sense more or less extended. Political Economy has not had, like most other sciences, Chemistry for example, the advantage of constructing her own vocabulary. Treating of subjects which have been familiar to men's thoughts since the beginning of the world, and the constant subject of their daily talk, she has found a nomenclature ready made, and has been forced to adopt it.

The meaning of the word *labour* is often limited exclusively to the muscular action of man upon materials. Hence those who execute the mechanical part of production are called the *working classes*.

The reader will comprehend that I give to this word a more extended sense. I understand by *labour* the application of our faculties to the satisfaction of our wants. *Wants, efforts, satisfactions*, this is the circle of Political Economy. *Effort* may be physical, intellectual, or even moral, as we shall immediately see.

It is not necessary to demonstrate in this place that all our organs, all or nearly all our faculties, may concur, and, in point of fact, do concur, in production. Attention, sagacity, intelligence, imagination, have assuredly their part in it.

M. Dunoyer, in his excellent work, *Sur la Liberté du Travail*, has included, and with scientific exactness, our moral faculties among the elements to which we are indebted for our wealth—an idea as original and suggestive as it is just. It is destined to enlarge and ennoble the field of Political Economy.

I shall not dwell here upon that idea farther than as it may enable me to throw a faint light upon the origin of a powerful agent of production, of which I shall have occasion to speak hereafter—I mean *Capital*.

If we examine in succession the material objects which contribute to the satisfaction of our wants, we shall discover without difficulty that all or nearly all require, in order to their being brought to perfection, more time, a larger portion of our life, than a man can expend without recruiting his strength, that is to say, without satisfying his wants. This supposes that those who had made these things had previously reserved, set aside, accumulated, provisions, to enable them to subsist during the operation.

The same observation applies to satisfactions which have nothing material belonging to them.

A clergyman cannot devote himself to preaching, a professor to

teaching, a magistrate to the maintenance of order, unless, by themselves, or by others, they are put in possession of means of subsistence previously created.

Let us go a little higher. Suppose a man isolated and forced to live by the chase. It is easy to comprehend that if every night he consumed the whole game which his day's hunting had furnished, he could never set himself to any other work, to build a cottage, for example, or repair his arms or implements. All progress would be interdicted in his case.

This is not the proper place to define the nature and functions of Capital. My sole object at present is to show that certain moral virtues co-operate very directly in the amelioration of our condition, even when viewed exclusively with reference to wealth,—among other virtues, order, foresight, self-control, economy.

To *foresee* is one of our noblest privileges, and it is scarcely necessary to say that, in all situations of life, the man who most clearly foresees the probable consequences of his acts and determinations has the best chance of success.

To *control his appetites*, to govern his passions, to sacrifice the present to the future, to submit to privations for the sake of greater but more distant advantages—such are the conditions essential to the formation of capital; and capital, as we have already partially seen, is itself the essential condition of all labour that is in any degree complicated or prolonged. It is quite evident that if we suppose two men placed in identically the same position, and possessed of the same amount of intelligence and activity, that man would make the most progress who, having accumulated provisions, had placed himself in a situation to undertake protracted works, to improve his implements, and thus to make the forces of nature co-operate in the realization of his designs.

I shall not dwell longer on this. We have only to look around us to be convinced that all our forces, all our faculties, all our virtues, concur in furthering the advancement of man and of society.

For the same reason, there are none of our vices which are not directly or indirectly the causes of poverty. Idleness paralyzes efforts, which are the sinews of production. Ignorance and error give our efforts a false direction. Improvidence lays us open to deceptions. Indulgence in the appetites of the hour prevents the accumulation of capital. Vanity leads us to devote our efforts to factitious enjoyments, in place of such as are real. Violence and fraud provoke reprisals, oblige us to surround ourselves with

troublesome precautions, and entail a great waste and destruction of power.

I shall wind up these preliminary observations on man with a remark which I have already made in relation to his wants. It is this, that the elements discussed and explained in this chapter, and which enter into and constitute economical science, are in their nature flexible and changeable. Wants, desires, materials and powers furnished by nature, our muscular force, our organs, our intellectual faculties, our moral qualities, all vary with the individual, and change with time and place. No two men, perhaps, are entirely alike in any one of these respects, certainly not in all—nay more, no man entirely resembles himself for two hours together. What one knows another is ignorant of—what one values another despises —here nature is prodigal, there niggardly—a virtue which it is difficult to practise in one climate or latitude becomes easy in another. Economical science has not, then, like the exact sciences, the advantage of possessing a fixed measure, and absolute unconditional truths—a graduated scale, a standard, which can be employed in measuring the intensity of desires, of efforts, and of satisfactions. Were we even to devote ourselves to solitary labour, like certain animals, we should still find ourselves placed in circumstances in some degree different; and were our external circumstances alike, were the medium in which we act the same for all, we should still differ from each other in our desires, our wants, our ideas, our sagacity, our energy, our manner of estimating and appreciating things, our foresight, our activity—so that a great and inevitable inequality would manifest itself. In truth, absolute isolation, the absence of all relations among men, is only an idle fancy coined in the brain of Rousseau. But supposing that this antisocial state, called the *state of nature*, had ever existed, I cannot help inquiring by what chain of reasoning Rousseau and his adepts have succeeded in planting Equality there? We shall afterwards see that Equality, like Wealth, like Liberty, like Fraternity, like Unity, is the end; it is not the starting point. It rises out of the natural and regular development of societies. The tendency of human nature is not away from, but towards, Equality. This is most consoling and most true.

Having spoken of our *wants*, and our *means* of providing for them, it remains to say a word respecting our *satisfactions*. They are the result of the entire mechanism we have described.

It is by the greater or less amount of physical, intellectual, and

moral *satisfactions* which mankind enjoy, that we discover whether the machine works well or ill. This is the reason why the word *consommation* [*consumption**], adopted by our Economists would have a profound meaning if we used it in its etymological signification as synonymous with *end*, or *completion*. Unfortunately, in common, and even in scientific, language, it presents to the mind a gross and material idea, exact without doubt when applied to our physical wants, but not at all so when used with reference to those of a more elevated order. The cultivation of corn, the manufacture of woollen cloth, terminate in *consumption* [consommation]. But can this be said with equal propriety of the works of the artist, the songs of the poet, the studies of the lawyer, the prelections of the professor, the sermons of the clergyman? It is here that we again experience the inconvenience of that fundamental error which caused Adam Smith to circumscribe Political Economy within the limits of a material circle; and the reader will pardon me for frequently making use of the term *satisfaction*, as applicable to all our wants and all our desires, and as more in accordance with the larger scope which I hope to be able to give to the science.

Political Economists have been frequently reproached with confining their attention exclusively to the *interests of the consumer*. "You forget the producer," we are told. But satisfaction being the end and design of all our efforts—the grand *consummation* or termination of the economic phenomena—is it not evident that it is there that the touchstone of progress is to be found? A man's happiness and well-being are not measured by his *efforts* but by his *satisfactions*, and this holds equally true of society in the aggregate. This is one of those truths which are never disputed when applied to an individual, but which are constantly disputed when applied to society at large. The phrase to which exception has been taken only means this, that Political Economy estimates the worth of what we do, not by the labour which it costs us to do it, but by the ultimate result, which resolves itself definitively into an increase or diminution of the general prosperity.

We have said, in reference to our wants and desires, that there are no two men exactly alike. The same thing may be said of our *satisfactions*: they are not held in equal estimation by all, which verifies the common saying, that *tastes differ*. Now it is by the intensity of our desires, and the variety of our tastes, that the direc-

* The term *consumption* employed by English Economists, the French Economists translate by *consommation*.—TRANSLATOR.

tion of our efforts is determined. It is here that the influence of morals upon industry becomes apparent. Man, as an individual, may be the slave of tastes which are factitious, puerile, and immoral. In this case it is self-evident that, his powers being limited, he can only satisfy his depraved desires at the expense of those which are laudable and legitimate. But, when society comes into play, this evident axiom is marked down as an error. We are led to believe that artificial tastes, illusory satisfactions, which we acknowledge as the source of individual poverty, are nevertheless the cause of national wealth, as opening a vent to manufactures. If it were so, we should arrive at the miserable conclusion, that the social state places man between poverty and vice. Once more, Political Economy reconciles, in the most rigorous and satisfactory manner, these apparent contradictions.

IV.

EXCHANGE.

EXCHANGE is Political Economy—it is Society itself—for it is impossible to conceive Society as existing without Exchange, or Exchange without Society. I shall not pretend in this chapter to exhaust so vast a subject. To present even an outline of it would require the entire volume.

If men, like snails, lived in complete isolation, if they did not exchange their ideas and exertions, and had no bargain or transactions with each other, we might have multitudes indeed—human units—individuals living in juxtaposition—but we could not have *Society*.

Nay, we should not even have individuals. To man isolation is death. But then, if he cannot live out of society, the legitimate conclusion is that the social state is his natural state.

All the sciences tend to establish this truth, which was so little understood by the men of the eighteenth century that they founded morals and politics on the contrary assertion. They were not content with placing the state of nature in opposition to the social state—they gave the first a decided preference. "Men were blessed," said Montaigne, "when they lived without bonds, without laws, without language, without religion." And we know that the system of Rousseau, which exercised, and still exercises, so powerful an influence over opinions and facts, rests altogether on this hypothesis—that men, unhappily, *agreed* one fine morning to abandon the innocent *state of nature* for the stormy *state of society*.

It is not the design of this chapter to bring together all possible refutations of this fundamental error, the most fatal which has ever infested the political sciences; for if society is the fruit of invention and convention, it follows that every one may propose a new model, and this, since Rousseau's time, has in fact been the

direction in which men's minds have tended. I could easily demonstrate, I believe, that isolation excludes language, as the absence of language excludes thought; and man, deprived of thought, instead of being a child of nature, ceases to be man at all.

But a peremptory refutation of the idea upon which Rousseau's doctrine reposes, flows naturally from some considerations on Exchange.

Want, Effort, Satisfaction,—such is man in an economical point of view.

We have seen that the two extreme terms are essentially intransmissible, for they terminate in sensation, they are sensation, which is the most personal thing in the world, as well the sensation which precedes the effort and determines it, as the sensation which follows the effort and rewards it.

It is then the *Effort* which is exchanged; indeed it cannot be otherwise, since exchange implies action, and Effort alone manifests the principle of activity. We cannot suffer or enjoy for one another, unless we could experience personally the pains and pleasures of others. But we can assist each other, work for one another, render reciprocal *services*, and place our faculties, or the results of their exercise, at the disposal of others, in consideration of a return. This is society. The causes, the effects, the laws, of these exchanges constitute the subject of political and social economy.

We not only can exchange efforts and render reciprocal services, but we do so necessarily. What I affirm is this, that our organization is such that we are obliged to work for one another under pain of death, of instant death. If it be so, society is our state of nature, since it is the only state in which we can live at all.

There is one observation which I have to make upon the equilibrium between our wants and our faculties, an observation which has always led me to admire the providential plan which regulates our destinies:—

In the state of isolation our wants exceed our powers;
In the social state our powers exceed our wants.

Hence it follows that man in an isolated state cannot subsist, whilst in the social state his most imperious wants give place to desires of a higher order, and continue to do so in an ascending career of progress and improvement to which it is impossible to set limits.

This is not declamation, but an assertion capable of being rigorously demonstrated by reasoning and analogy, if not by experience. And why can it not be demonstrated by experience, by direct observation? Precisely because it is true—precisely because man not being able to exist in a state of isolation, it becomes impossible to exhibit in actual nature the effects of absolute solitude. You cannot lay hold of a nonentity. You can prove to me that a triangle never has four sides, but you cannot, in support of your demonstration, place before my eyes a tetragonal triangle. If you could, the exhibition of such a triangle would disprove your assertion. In the same way to ask me for experimental proof, to ask me to study the effects of isolation in actual nature, is to palm a contradiction upon me; for life and isolation being incompatible, we have never seen, and never shall see, men without social relations.

If there are animals (of which I am ignorant) destined by their organization to make the round of their existence in absolute isolation, it is very clear that nature must exactly proportion their wants and their powers. It is possible to conceive that their powers have the superiority, in which case these animals would be progressive and capable of improvement. An equilibrium of wants and powers would render them stationary beings; but the superiority of their wants to their powers it is impossible to conceive. From their birth, from their first appearance in life, their faculties must be complete—relatively to the wants for which they have to provide, or at least both must be developed in just proportion. Otherwise the species would die the moment they came into existence, and, consequently, could not be the subject of our observation.

Of all the species of living beings which surround us, undoubtedly none have so many wants as man. In none is infancy so long, so feeble, and so helpless—in none is maturity loaded with so much responsibility—in none is old age so frail and so liable to suffering. And, as if we had not enough of wants, man has tastes also, the satisfaction of which exercises his faculties quite as much as his wants. Scarcely has he appeased his hunger than he begins to pamper himself with dainties—no sooner has he clothed himself than he sighs for finery—no sooner has he obtained shelter than he proceeds to embellish and decorate his residence. His mind is as restless as his body is exacting. He seeks to fathom the secrets of nature, to tame animals, to control the elements, to

dive into the bowels of the earth, to traverse broad seas, to soar above the clouds, to annihilate time and space. He desires to know the motions, the springs, the laws, of his mind and heart—to control his passions—to conquer immortality—to become a god—to bring all things into subjection; nature, his fellow-men, himself. In a word, his desires and aspirations expand continually, and tend towards the infinite.

Thus, in no other species are the faculties so susceptible of vast development as in man. It is his alone to compare and to judge, to reason and to speak, to foresee, to sacrifice the present to the future. He alone can transmit, from generation to generation, his works, his thoughts, the treasures of his experience. He alone is capable of a perfectibility which is indefinite, which forms a chain the countless links of which would seem to stretch beyond the limits of the present world.

Let me here set down an observation which belongs properly to Political Economy. However extended may be the domain of our faculties, they do not reach the length of *creating* anything. Man cannot, in truth, augment or diminish the number of existing particles of matter. His action is limited to subjecting the substances which he finds around him to modifications and combinations which fit them for his use.*

To modify substances, so as to increase their utility in relation to us, is to *produce*, or rather it is one mode of producing. From this I conclude that value (as we shall afterwards more fully explain) does not reside in these substances themselves, but in the effort which intervenes in order to modify them, and which exchange brings into comparison with other analogous efforts. This is the reason why value is simply the appreciation of services exchanged, whether a material commodity does or does not intervene. As regards the notion of value, it is a matter of perfect indifference whether I render to another a direct service, as, for example, in performing for him a surgical operation, or an indirect service in preparing for him a curative substance. In this last case the *utility* is in the substance, but the *value* is in the service, in the effort, intellectual and muscular, made by one man for the benefit of another. It is by a pure metonymy that we attribute value to the material substance itself, and here, as on many other occasions, metaphor leads science astray.

I return to the subject of man's organization. If we adhere to

* V. J. B. Say.

the preceding notions, he differs from other animals only in the greater extent of his wants, and the superiority of his powers. All, in fact, are subject to the one and provided with the other. A bird undertakes long journeys in search of the temperature which suits it best—the beaver crosses the river on a bridge of his own construction—the hawk pursues his prey openly—the cat watches for it with patience—the spider prepares a snare—all labour in order to live and multiply.

But while nature has established an exact proportion between the wants of animals and their faculties, if she has treated man with greater bounty and munificence, if, in order to force him to be *sociable*, she has decreed that in a state of isolation his wants should surpass his faculties, whilst, on the contrary, in the social state, his powers, superior to his wants, open to him an unlimited field for nobler enjoyments, we ought to acknowledge that, as in his relation with the Creator man is elevated above the beasts by the religious sentiment, in his relations with his fellow-creatures by his sense of justice, in his relations with himself by the moral principle—in like manner, in relation to the means of living and multiplying, he is distinguished by a remarkable phenomenon, namely, EXCHANGE.

Shall I essay to paint the state of poverty, of destitution, and of ignorance, in which, but for the power of exchanging, the human species would have been sunk, had it not, indeed, as is more likely, disappeared altogether.

One of the most popular philosophers, in a romance which has been the charm of the young from generation to generation, has shown us man surmounting by his energy, his activity, his intelligence, the difficulties of absolute solitude. For the purpose of setting clearly before us what are the resources of that noble creature, the author has exhibited him as accidentally cut off from civilisation. It was part of Defoe's plan to throw Robinson Crusoe into the Island of Juan Fernandez alone, naked, deprived of all that the union of efforts, the division of employments, exchange, society, add to the human powers.

And yet, although the fancied obstacles are but imaginary, Defoe would have taken away from his tale even the shadow of probability if, too faithful to the thought which he wished to develop, he had not made forced concessions to the social state, by admitting that his hero had saved from shipwreck some indispensable things, such as provisions, gunpowder, a gun, a hatchet, a

knife, cords, planks, iron, &c.; a decisive proof that society is the necessary medium in which man lives, and out of which not even a romance writer could figure him as existing.

And, observe, that Robinson Crusoe carried with him into solitude another *social* treasure, a thousand times more precious than all these, and which the waves could not engulf, I mean his ideas, his recollections, his experience, above all, his language, without which he would not have been able to hold converse with himself, that is to say, to think.

We have the unfortunate and unreasonable habit of attributing to the *social state* the sufferings which we see around us. We are right so far, if our object be to compare society with itself in different degrees of advancement and improvement; but we are wrong if our object be to compare the social state, however imperfect, with a state of isolation. To authorize us to assert that society impairs the condition, I do not say of man in general, but of some men, and these the poorest and most wretched of the species, we must begin by proving that the worst provided of our fellow-creatures have to support in the social state a heavier load of privations and sufferings than the man whose lot has been cast in solitude. Now, examine the life of the humblest day-labourer. Pass in review, in all their details, the articles of his daily consumption. He is covered with some coarse clothing, he eats a little common bread, he sleeps under shelter, and on boards, at least if he has no better couch. Now, let us ask if man in a state of isolation, deprived of the resources of Exchange, could by any possibility procure for himself that coarse clothing, that common bread, that rude bed, that humble shelter? Rousseau himself, the passionate enthusiast of the *state of nature*, avows the utter impossibility of it. Men dispensed with everything, he says; they went naked, they slept in the open air. Thus Rousseau, to exalt the state of nature, was led to make happiness consist in privation. And yet I affirm that this negative happiness is a chimera, and that man in a state of isolation would infallibly perish in a very few hours. Perhaps Rousseau would have gone the length of saying that that would have been the perfection of his system; and he would have been consistent, for if privation be happiness, death is perfection.

I trust the reader will not conclude from what precedes that we are insensible to the social sufferings of our fellow-men. Because these sufferings are less even in an imperfect state of society than

in a state of isolation, it does not follow that we should not invoke, with all earnestness, that progress which constantly diminishes them. But if isolation is something worse than all that is bad in the social state, then I am justified in saying that it places our wants, even the most imperious, far above our faculties and our means of providing for wants.

In what way does Exchange advantageously reverse all this, and place our faculties above our wants?

And first this is proved by the very fact of civilisation. If our wants surpassed our faculties, we should be beings invincibly retrograde; if there were an equilibrium between them, we should be invincibly stationary. But we advance; which shows that at every stage of social life, as compared with the period that preceded it, a certain portion of our powers, relatively to a given amount of satisfactions, is left disposable. We shall endeavour to explain this marvellous phenomenon.

The explanation which Condillac has given appears to me to be quite unsatisfactory and empirical—in fact it explains nothing. "From the very fact," he says, "that an exchange is made, it follows that there must be profit for the two contracting parties, for otherwise it would not take place. Then each exchange includes two gains for humanity."

Holding this proposition as true, we see in it only the statement of a result. It is in this way that the *Malade Imaginaire* explains the narcotic virtue of opium:—

> Quia est in eo
> Virtus dormitiva
> Quæ facit dormire.

Exchange includes two gains, you say. How? Why? It results from the fact that it takes place. But why does it take place? What motive has induced the contracting parties to effect the exchange? Has Exchange in itself a mysterious virtue, necessarily beneficial, and incapable of explanation?

Others make the advantage consist in this, that the one gives away a commodity of which he has too much in order to receive another of which he has too little. Exchange, they say, is a *barter of the superfluous for the necessary.* This is contradicted by facts which pass under our own eyes; for who can say that the peasant, in giving away the corn which he has raised, but which he is never to eat, gives away a superfluity? I see in this axiom

very clearly how two men may make an accidental arrangement, but I see no explanation of progress.

Observation gives us a more satisfactory explanation of the power of Exchange.

Exchange has two manifestations—namely, union of forces, and separation of occupations.

It is very clear that in many cases the united force of several men is superior, all things considered, to the sum of their individual forces. Suppose that what is wanted is to remove a heavy load. Where a thousand men in succession may fail, it is possible that four men may succeed by uniting their efforts. Just let us reflect how few things were ever accomplished in this world without union!

And yet this is only the concurrence of muscular forces in a common design. Nature has endued us with very varied physical, intellectual, and moral faculties. There are in the co-operation of these faculties endless combinations. Is it wished to accomplish a useful work, like the construction of a road, or the defence of a country? One gives the community the benefit of his strength, another of his agility, another of his courage, another of his experience, foresight, imagination, even of his reputation. It is easy to comprehend that the same men acting singly could not have attained, or even conceived, the same results.

Now, union of forces implies Exchange. To induce men to co-operate, they have the prospect of participating in the benefit to be obtained. Each makes the other profit by his Efforts, and he profits by the other's Efforts in return, which is Exchange.

We see how Exchange in this way augments our Satisfactions. The benefit consists in this, that efforts of equal intensity tend, by the mere fact of their union, to superior results. There is here no trace of the pretended *barter of the superfluous for the necessary*, any more than of the double and empirical profit alleged by Condillac.

The same remark applies to division of labour. Indeed, if we regard the matter more closely, we shall be convinced that the separation of employments is only another and more permanent manner of uniting our forces—of co-operating, of *associating;* and it is quite correct to say, as we shall afterwards demonstrate, that the present social organization, provided Exchange is left free and unfettered, is itself a vast and beautiful association —a marvellous association, very different indeed from that dreamt

of by the Socialists, since, by an admirable mechanism, it is in perfect accordance with individual independence. Every one can enter and leave it at any moment which suits his convenience. He contributes to it voluntarily, and reaps a satisfaction superior to his contribution, and always increasing—a satisfaction determined by the laws of justice and the nature of things, not by the arbitrary will of a chief. But this is anticipating. All we have to do at present is to explain how the division of labour increases our power.

Without dwelling much on this subject, as it is one of the few which do not give rise to controversy, a remark or two may not be out of place. Its importance has perhaps been somewhat disparaged. In order to demonstrate the powerful effects of the Division of Labour, it has been usual to describe its marvellous results in certain manufactures—in the making of pins, for example. But the subject admits of being viewed in a more general and philosophical light. The force of habit has the singular effect of concealing from us, and rendering us unconscious of, the phenomena in the midst of which we live and move. No saying is more profoundly true than that of Rousseau, "Much philosophy is needed for the observation of what we see every day." It may not then be without use to recall what we owe to Exchange, without perceiving it.

In what way has the power of exchanging elevated mankind to the height of civilisation we have now attained? I answer, by the influence which it exerts on *Labour*, upon the co-operation of *natural agents*, upon the *powers and faculties* of man, and upon *Capital*.

Adam Smith has clearly demonstrated its influence on Labour.

"The great increase in the quantity of work, which, in consequence of the division of labour, the same number of people are capable of performing, is owing to three circumstances," says that celebrated Economist; "*First*, to the increase of dexterity in every particular workman; *secondly*, to the saving of time, which is commonly lost in passing from one species of work to another; *thirdly*, to this, that men are much more likely to discover easier and readier methods of attaining an object when the whole attention of their minds is directed to that single object, than when it is dissipated among a great variety of things."

Those who, like Adam Smith, see in Labour the exclusive source of wealth, confine themselves to inquiring in what way the

division of labour increases its efficiency. But we have seen in the preceding chapter that labour is not the sole agent in procuring us satisfaction. *Natural forces* co-operate. That is beyond doubt.

Thus in agriculture, the action of the sun and of the rain, the moisture of the earth, and the gases diffused in the atmosphere, are undoubtedly agents which co-operate with human labour in the production of vegetable substances.

Manufacturing industry owes analogous services to the chemical qualities of certain substances, to water-power, to the elasticity of steam, to gravitation, to electricity.

Commerce has turned to the profit of man the vigour and instincts of certain races of animals, the force of the winds which fill the sails of his ships, the laws of magnetism, which, acting on the compass, direct the course of these ships through the pathless ocean.

There are two verities which are beyond all dispute. The first is, that *the more man avails himself of the forces of nature, the better he is provided with everything he requires.*

It is sufficiently evident that, with equal exertion, we obtain more corn from a rich loamy soil than from sterile rocks or arid sands.

The second is, *that natural agents are unequally diffused over the various countries of the world.*

Who would venture to maintain that all soils are equally well fitted for all kinds of culture, or all countries for the same description of manufactures?

Now, if it be true on the one hand that natural forces are unequally diffused in the different countries of the world, and on the other that men are richer in proportion as they avail themselves of them, it follows that the faculty of Exchange immeasurably augments the useful co-operation of these forces.

And here we recur once more to gratuitous and onerous utility, the former being substituted for the latter by virtue of Exchange. Is it not very clear, that if men were deprived of the power of Exchange, and were obliged to produce ice under the equator, and sugar at the poles, they must spend much pains in doing what heat and cold do gratuitously, and that for them an immense proportion of the Forces of nature would remain inoperative? Thanks to Exchange, these forces are rendered useful to us wherever we encounter them. Corn land is sown with wheat

—in wine-growing countries the land is planted with vines—there are fishermen on the coasts, and wood-cutters among the mountains. In one place a wheel which does the work of ten men is set in motion by water—in another, by wind. Nature becomes a slave, whom we have neither to feed, nor to clothe, nor to pay—who costs nothing either to our purse or our conscience.* The same amount of human efforts, that is to say, the same services, the same value, realizes a constantly increasing amount of utility. For each given result a certain portion only of human exertion is absorbed; the remainder, by means of the intervention of natural Forces, is rendered disposable, and it sets to work to overcome new obstacles, to minister to new desires, to realize new utilities.

The effects of Exchange upon our intellectual Faculties are so great, that we can scarcely even imagine their extent.

"Knowledge," says M. de Tracy, "is the most precious of all our acquisitions, since it directs and governs the employment of our forces, and renders them more prolific, in proportion as it is sounder and more extensive. No man can himself observe everything, and it is much easier to learn than to invent. But when several men communicate with each other, what is observed by one is soon known to the rest; and if there be among them but one person of superior ingenuity, precious discoveries speedily become the property of all. In such circumstances, knowledge is much more rapidly increased than it could be in a state of isolation, without taking into account the power of preserving it, and consequently of accumulating it from one generation to another."

If the resources which nature has accumulated around man and placed at his disposal are varied, the human faculties themselves are not less so. We are not all equally endowed with strength, courage, intelligence, patience, or with artistic, literary, and industrial aptitudes. Without exchange, this diversity, far from contributing to our well-being, would contribute to our misery, each feeling less the advantage of those Faculties he possessed than the deprivation of those he wanted. Thanks to exchange, a man possessed of bodily strength may, up to a certain point, dispense with genius, and a man of intelligence with bodily strength; for by the admirable community which the power of exchange

* Moreover, this slave, by reason of his superiority, ends in the long-run by depreciating and emancipating all others. This is a *harmony* which I leave to the sagacity of the reader to follow to its consequences.

establishes among men, each individual participates in the distinctive qualities of his neighbours.

In order to obtain the satisfactions he desires, it is not enough, in most cases, to work—to exercise his faculties upon, or by means of, natural agents. He requires also to have tools, instruments, machines, provisions—in a word, Capital. Suppose a small tribe, composed of ten families, each, in working exclusively for itself, being obliged to engage in ten different employments. In that case each family must have ten sets of industrial apparatus. The tribe would require to possess ten ploughs, ten teams of oxen, ten forges, ten joiner's and carpenter's workshops, ten looms, &c.; while, with the power of exchange, a single plough, a single team, a single forge, a single loom, would be sufficient. It is impossible to conceive the economy of Capital which we owe to exchange.

The reader now sees clearly what constitutes the true power of exchange. It is not, as Condillac says, that it implies *two gains*, because of each of the contracting parties valuing more highly what he receives than what he gives. Neither is it that each gives away what is superfluous for what is necessary. It lies simply in this, that when one man says to another—"Do you only this, and I shall do only that, and we shall divide," there is a better and more advantageous employment of labour, of faculties, of natural agents, of capital, and consequently there is *more* to divide. And these results take place to a still greater extent when three, ten, a hundred, a thousand, or several millions of men enter into the association.

The two propositions which I have laid down, then, are rigorously true, viz.:—

In isolation our wants exceed our powers;

In society our powers exceed our wants.

The first is true, seeing that the whole surface of our country would not maintain one man in a state of absolute isolation.

The second is true, seeing that, in fact, the population which is spread over that same surface multiplies and grows richer.

Progress of Exchange.—The primitive form of exchange is *Barter*. Two persons, one of whom desires an object, and is possessed of an object which the other desires, agree to cede these objects reciprocally, or they agree to work separately, each at one thing, but for the purpose of dividing the total product of their labour in arranged proportions. This is *Barter*, which is, as

the Socialists would say, Exchange, traffic, commerce *in embryo.* We observe here two Desires as motives—two Efforts as means—two Satisfactions as results, or as the termination and completion of the entire cycle; and this evolution is not essentially different from the same evolution accomplished in a state of isolation, except that the desires and satisfactions have, as their nature requires, remained intransmissible, and that Efforts alone have been exchanged. In other words, the two persons have worked for each other, and have rendered each other reciprocal *services.*

It is at this point that Political Economy truly begins, for it is here that *value* first makes its appearance. Barter takes place only after an arrangement, a discussion. Each of the contracting parties is governed by considerations of self-interest. Each of them makes a calculation, which in effect comes to this, "I shall barter if the barter procures me the *satisfaction* I *desire* with a less *Effort.*" It is certainly a marvellous phenomenon that diminished efforts can yet keep pace with undiminished desires and satisfactions; and this is explained by the considerations which I have presented in the first part of this chapter. When two commodities or two services are *bartered,* we may conclude that they are of *equal value.* We shall have to analyze afterwards the notion of *value,* but this vague definition is sufficient for the present.

We may suppose a *round-about barter,* including three contracting parties. *Paul* renders a service to *Peter,* who renders an equivalent service to *James,* who in turn renders an equivalent service to *Paul,* by means of which all is balanced. I need not say that this round-about transaction only takes place because it suits all the parties, without changing either the nature or the consequences of barter.

The essence of Barter is discovered in all its purity even when the number of contracting parties is greater. In my *commune* the vine-dresser pays with wine for the services of the blacksmith, the barber, the tailor, the beadle, the curate, the grocer; while the blacksmith, the barber, the tailor, in turn deliver to the grocer, for the commodities consumed during the year, the wine which they have received from the vine-dresser.

This round-about Barter, I cannot too often repeat, does not change in the least degree the primary notions explained in the preceding chapters. When the evolution is complete, each of those who have had part in it presents still the triple phenomenon, *want, effort, satisfaction.* We have but to add, the exchange of

efforts, the transmission of services, the separation of employments, with all their resulting advantages—advantages to which every one of the parties has contributed, seeing that isolated individual labour is a *pis aller*, always reserved, and which is only renounced in consideration of a certain advantage.

It is easy to comprehend that Barter in kind, especially the indirect and round-about barter which I have described, cannot be much extended, and it is unnecessary to dwell upon the obstacles which set limits to it. How could he manage, for example, who wished to exchange his house against the thousand articles which enter into his annual consumption? In any case, Barter could never take place but among the few persons who happen to be acquainted with each other. Progress and the Division of Labour would soon reach their limits if mankind had not discovered the means of facilitating exchanges.

This is the reason why men, from the earliest ages of society, have employed an intermediate commodity to effect their transactions—corn, wine, animals, and almost always, the precious metals. Such commodities perform this function of facilitating exchanges more or less conveniently; still any one of them can perform it, provided that, in the transaction, Effort is represented by *value*, the transmission of which is the thing to be effected.

When recourse is had to an intermediate commodity, two economic phenomena make their appearance, which we denominate *Sale* and *Purchase*. It is evident that the idea of *sale* and *purchase* is not included in direct Barter, or even in round-about Barter. When a man gives another something to drink, in consideration of receiving from him something to eat, we have a simple fact which we cannot analyze farther. Now, what we must remark in the very outset of the science is, that exchanges which are effected by means of an intermediate commodity do not lose the nature, the essence, the quality of barter — only the barter is no longer simple, but compound. To borrow the very judicious and profound observation of J. B. Say, it is a barter of *two factors* [troc à deux facteurs], of which the one is called *sale* and the other *purchase*—factors whose union is indispensable in order to constitute a complete barter.

In truth, this discovery of a convenient means of effecting exchanges makes no alteration in the nature either of men or of things. We have still in every case the *want* which determines the *effort*, and the *satisfaction* which rewards it. The Exchange

is complete only when the man who has made an *effort* in favour of another has obtained from him an equivalent service, that is to say *satisfaction*. To effect this, he *sells* his service for the intermediate commodity, and then with that intermediate commodity he *purchases* equivalent services, when the two factors bring back the transaction to simple *barter*.

Take the case of a physician for instance. For many years he has devoted his time and his faculties to the study of diseases and their remedies. He has visited patients, he has prescribed for them, in a word, he has rendered *services*. Instead of receiving compensation from his patients in *direct services*, which would have constituted simple barter, he receives from them an intermediate commodity, the precious metals, wherewith he purchases the satisfactions which were the ultimate object he had in view. His patients have not furnished him with bread, wine, or other goods, but they have furnished him with the value of these. They could not have given him money unless they had themselves rendered *services*. As far as they are concerned, therefore, there is a balance of *services*, and there is also a balance as regards the physician; and could we in thought follow this circulation of services out and out, we should see that Exchange carried on by the intervention of money resolves itself into a multitude of acts of simple barter.

In the case of simple barter, *value* is the appreciation of two services exchanged and directly compared with each other. In the case of *Compound Exchange* the two services measure each other's value, not directly, but by comparison with this mean term, this intermediate commodity, which is called Money. We shall see, by and by, what difficulties, what errors, have sprung from this complication. At present it is sufficient to remark that the intervention of this intermediate commodity makes no change whatever in the notion of *value*.

Only admit that exchange is at once the cause and the effect of the division of labour and the separation of employments; only admit that the separation of occupations multiplies *satisfactions* in proportion to *efforts*, for the reasons explained at the beginning of this chapter, and you will comprehend at once the services which Money has rendered to mankind, by the simple fact that it facilitates Exchanges. By means of Money, Exchange is indefinitely extended and developed. Each man casts his services into the common fund, without knowing who is to enjoy the satisfactions

which they are calculated to procure. In the same way he obtains from society, not immediate services, but money with which he can afterwards purchase services, where, when, and how it may best suit him. In this way the ultimate transactions occur at various times and places, between people totally unacquainted with each other, and in the greater number of cases no one knows by whose *efforts* his *wants* will be *satisfied*, or to the *satisfaction* of whose *desires* his own *efforts* will contribute. Exchange, by the intervention of Money, resolves itself into innumerable acts of *barter*, of which the contracting parties themselves are ignorant.

Exchange, however, confers so great a benefit on society (is it not society itself?) that it facilitates and extends it by other means besides the introduction of money. In logical order, after Want and Satisfaction united in the same individual with isolated Effort —after simple barter—after barter *à deux facteurs*, or Exchange composed of *sale* and *purchase*—come other transactions, extended farther over time and space by means of credit, mortgages, bills of exchange, bank notes, &c. By means of this wondrous machinery, the result of civilisation, the improver of civilisation, and itself becoming more perfect at the same time, an exertion made at the present hour in Paris may contribute to the satisfaction and enjoyment of an unknown stranger, separated from us by oceans and centuries; and he who makes the exertion will not the less receive for it a present recompense, through the intervention of persons who advance the remuneration, and wait to be reimbursed in a distant country or at a future day. Marvellous and astonishing complication! which, when subjected to analysis, shows us finally the accomplishment of the entire economic cycle —*want, effort, satisfaction*, taking place in each individual, according to a just law.

Limits of Exchange.—The general character of Exchange is *to diminish the proportion which the Effort bears to the Satisfaction.* Between our wants and our satisfactions *obstacles* are interposed, which we succeed in diminishing by the union of forces or the division of occupations, that is to say, by *Exchange.* But Exchange itself encounters obstacles and demands efforts. The proof of this is the immense amount of human labour which it sets in motion. The precious metals, roads, canals, railways, wheeled carriages, ships—all these things absorb a considerable portion of human activity. Observe, besides, how many men are exclusively occupied in facilitating exchanges—how many bankers,

merchants, shopkeepers, brokers, carriers, sailors! This vast and costly apparatus shows us, better than any reasoning, how much efficacy there is in the power of Exchange, for why otherwise should society be encumbered with it?

Since it is the nature of Exchange to *save* efforts and to *exact* them, it is easy to understand what are its natural limits. In virtue of that motive which urges man to choose always the least of two evils, Exchange will go on extending itself indefinitely as long as the effort it exacts is less than the effort which it saves. And its extension will stop naturally when, upon the whole, the aggregate of satisfactions obtained by the division of labour becomes less, by reason of the increasing difficulties attending Exchange, than if we procured them by direct production.

Suppose the case of a small tribe. If they desire to procure themselves satisfactions they must make an effort. They may address themselves to another tribe, and say to them, "Make this effort for us, and we shall make another for you." The stipulation may suit all parties, if, for example, the second tribe is in a situation to obtain greater assistance than the other from natural and gratuitous forces. In that case it may be able to realize the result with an effort equal to eight, while the first could only accomplish it by an effort equal to twelve. There is thus an economy equal to four for the first. But then come the cost of transport, the remuneration of intermediate agents, in a word, the effort exacted by the machinery of Exchange. This cost must then clearly be added to the figure eight. Exchange will continue to take place as long as the Exchange *itself* does not cost four. The moment it reaches that figure it will stop. It is quite unnecessary to make laws on this subject; for either the law intervenes before this level is attained, and then it is injurious—it prevents an economy of efforts—or it comes after it, and then it is useless, like an ordinance forbidding people to light their lamps at noonday.

When Exchange is thus arrested, from ceasing to be advantageous, the slightest improvement in the *commercial apparatus* gives it a new activity. Between Orleans and Angoulême a certain number of transactions take place. These towns effect an Exchange as often as they can obtain a greater amount of enjoyments by that means than by direct production. They stop short the moment the cost of obtaining commodities by means of exchange, aggravated by the cost of effecting the exchange

itself, surpasses, or reaches, that of obtaining them by means of direct production. In these circumstances, if we improve the conditions under which Exchanges are effected—if the merchants' profits are diminished, or the means of transport facilitated—if roads and railways are made, mountains levelled, and bridges thrown over rivers—in a word, if obstacles are removed, the number of Exchanges will be increased; for men are always desirous to avail themselves of the great advantages which we have ascribed to Exchange, and to substitute gratuitous for onerous utility. The improvement of the *commercial apparatus*, then, is equivalent to bringing two cities locally nearer to each other. Whence it follows that bringing men physically, locally, nearer each other is equivalent to improving the conditions of exchange. This is very important. It is, in fact, the solution of the problem of population; and this is precisely the element in that great problem that Malthus has neglected. Where Malthus saw Discordance, attention to this element enables us to discover *Harmony*.

When men effect an exchange, it is because they succeed by that means in obtaining an equal amount of *satisfaction* at a less expense of *effort;* and the reason of this is, that on both sides services are rendered which are the means of procuring a greater proportion of what we have termed *gratuitous utility*.

Now, you have always a greater number of exchanges in proportion as you remove the *obstacles* which impede exchanges, and diminish the *efforts* which these exchanges exact.

And Exchange encounters fewer obstacles, and exacts fewer efforts, just in proportion as you bring men nearer each other, and mass them more together. A greater density of population, then, is accompanied by a greater proportion of *gratuitous utility*. That density imparts greater power to the machinery of exchange; it sets free and renders disposable a portion of human efforts; it is a cause of progress.

Now, if you please, let us leave generalities and look at facts.

Does not a street of equal length render more service in Paris than in a remote village? Is not a mile of railway of more use in the Department of the Seine than in the Department of the Landes? Is not a London merchant content with smaller profits on account of the greater amount of business which he transacts? In everything we shall discover two sets of exchange agencies at work, which although identical in kind, act very dif-

ferently, according as they operate in a densely or a thinly peopled locality.

The density of population not only enables us to reap more advantage from the machinery of exchange, it permits us to improve that machinery, and increase its power. Where the population is condensed, these improvements are advantageous, because they save us more efforts than they exact; but where the population is scattered and thin-spread, they exact more efforts than they save.

On leaving the metropolis for a time, and going to reside in a small provincial town, one is astonished to find that in many instances the most ordinary *services* can only be obtained at great expense, and with time and difficulty.

It is not the material part of the commercial mechanism only which is turned to account and improved by the single circumstance of the density of population, but the moral part also. When men are massed together, they have more facility in dividing their employments, in uniting their powers, and in combining to found churches and schools, to provide for their common security, to establish banks and insurance companies, in a word, to procure themselves all the common enjoyments with a much smaller proportion of efforts.

We shall revert to these considerations when we come to enter on the subject of Population. At present we shall make only this remark:—

Exchange enables men to turn their faculties to better account, to economize capital, to obtain more assistance from the gratuitous agencies of nature, to increase the proportion of gratuitous to onerous utility, to diminish, consequently, the ratio of efforts to results, and to leave at their disposal a part of their forces, so that they may withdraw a greater and greater portion of them from the business of providing for their primary and more imperious wants, and devote them to procuring enjoyments of a higher and higher order.

If Exchange saves efforts, it also exacts them. It extends, and spreads, and increases, up to the point at which the effort it exacts becomes equal to the effort which it saves, and it stops there until, by the improvement of the commercial apparatus, or by the circumstance exclusively of the condensation of population, and bringing men together in masses, it again returns to the conditions which are essential to its onward and ascending march.

Whence it follows that laws which limit or hamper Exchanges are always either hurtful or superfluous.

Governments which persuade themselves that nothing good can be done but through their instrumentality, refuse to acknowledge this harmonic law.

Exchange develops itself NATURALLY *until it becomes more onerous than useful, and at that point it* NATURALLY *stops.*

In consequence, we find governments everywhere busying themselves in favouring or restraining trade.

In order to carry it *beyond* its natural limits, they set to conquering colonies and opening new markets. In order to confine it *within* its natural bounds, they invent all sorts of restrictions and fetters.

This intervention of Force in human transactions is the source of innumerable evils.

The Increase of this force itself is an evil to begin with; for it is very evident that the State cannot make conquests, retain distant countries under its rule, or divert the natural course of trade by the action of tariffs, without greatly increasing the number of its agents.

The Diversion of the public Force from its legitimate functions is an evil still greater than its Increase. Its rational mission was to protect Liberty and Property; and here you have it violating Liberty and Property. All just notions and principles are thus effaced from men's minds. The moment you admit that Oppression and Spoliation are legitimate, provided they are legal—provided they interfere only by means of the Law or public Force, you find by degrees each class of citizens demanding that the interest of every other class should be sacrificed to it.

This intervention of Force in the business of Exchanges, whether it succeeds in promoting or in restraining them, cannot fail to occasion both the Loss and Displacement of labour and capital, and, of consequence, a disturbance of the natural distribution of the population. On one side, natural interests disappear, on the other, artificial interests are created, and men are forced to follow the course of these interests. It is thus we see important branches of industry established where they ought not to be. France makes sugar; England spins cotton, brought from the plains of India. Centuries of war, torrents of blood, the dissipation of vast treasures, have brought about these results, and the effect has been to substitute in Europe sickly and precarious for sound and healthy enterprises, and to open the door to com-

mercial crises, to stoppages, to instability, and finally to Pauperism.

But I find I am anticipating. What we ought first to do is to acquaint ourselves with the free and natural development of human societies, and then investigate the Disturbances.

Moral Force of Exchange.—We must repeat, at the risk of wounding modern sentimentalism, that Political Economy belongs to the region of *business*, and business is transacted under the influence of *personal interest.* In vain the puritans of socialism cry out, "This is frightful; we shall change all this." Such declamations involve a flat contradiction. Do we make purchases on the Quai Voltaire in the name of Fraternity?

It would be to fall into another kind of declamation to attribute morality to acts determined and governed by *self-interest.* But a good and wise Providence may so have arranged the social order that these very acts, destitute of morality in their motives, may nevertheless tend to moral results. Is it not so in the case of labour? Now, I maintain that Exchange, whether in the incipient state of simple barter, or expanded into a vast and complicated commerce, develops in society tendencies more noble than the motive which gives rise to it.

I have certainly no wish to attribute to only one of our powers all that constitutes the grandeur, the glory, and the charm of our existence. As there are two forces in the material world—one which goes from the circumference to the centre, the other from the centre to the circumference—there are also two principles in the social world, self-interest and sympathy. It were a misfortune indeed did we fail to recognise the benefits and joys of the sympathetic principle, as manifested in friendship, love, filial piety, parental tenderness, charity, patriotism, religion, enthusiasm for the good and the beautiful. Some have maintained that the sympathetic principle is only a magnificent form of self-love, that to love others is at bottom only an intelligent way of loving ourselves. This is not the place to enter on the solution of that problem. Whether these two native energies are distinct or confounded, it is enough for us to know that far from being antagonistic, as is constantly said, they act in combination, and concur in the realization of one and the same result, the general good.

I have established these two propositions:—

In a state of isolation, our wants exceed our powers;

In consequence of Exchange, our powers exceed our wants.

These propositions show the end and purpose of society. There are two others which guarantee its indefinite improvement:—

In a state of isolation, the gain of one may be the loss of another;
In consequence of Exchange, the gain of each is the gain of all.

Is it necessary to prove that, if nature had destined man to a solitary life, the prosperity of one would have been incompatible with that of another, and the more numerous men had been, the less chance would they have had of attaining prosperity? At all events, we see clearly in what way numbers might have been injurious, and we do not see how they could have been beneficial. And then, I would ask, under what form could the principle of sympathy have manifested itself? How, or on what occasion, could it have been called forth? Could we have even comprehended it?

But men exchange, and Exchange, as we have seen, implies the separation of employments. It gives birth to professions and trades. Each man sets himself to overcome a certain class of obstacles, for the benefit of the Community. Each makes it his business to render a certain description of *services*. Now, a complete analysis of value demonstrates that each service *has value* in the first instance in proportion to its intrinsic utility, and afterwards in proportion to the wealth of those to whom it is furnished —that is to say, in proportion as the community to whom the service is rendered has a greater demand for it, and is in a better situation to pay for it. Experience shows us that the artisan, the physician, the lawyer, the merchant, the carrier, the professor, the *savant*, derive greater returns from their services in Paris, in London, or at New York, than in the landes of Gascony, or the mountains of Wales, or the prairies of the Far West. And does not this confirm the truth, *that each man is more likely to prosper in proportion to the general prosperity of the community in which he lives?*

Of all the harmonies which have come under my observation, this is beyond doubt the most important, the finest, the most decisive, the most suggestive. It sums up and includes all the others. This is why I can give only a very incomplete demonstration of it in this place. The whole scope and spirit of this work will establish it; and I shall deem it a fortunate thing if its probability at least is made so apparent as to induce the reader to convince himself of its truth by farther inquiry and reflection.

For it is beyond question that on this turns our decision be-

tween natural and artificial Organizations—that on this, and this alone, hangs the solution of the Social Problem. If the prosperity of all be the condition of the prosperity of each, then we can repose with confidence not only on the economic power of free trade, but on its moral force. If men only understood their true interests, restrictions, mercantile jealousies, commercial wars, monopolies, would go down under the influence of public opinion; and before soliciting the interposition of government in any case, the question would be, not "How am *I* to be benefited by it?" but "What advantage is likely to result from it to the community?" This last question, I grant, is sometimes elicited by the principle of sympathy; but let men be once enlightened, and it will be called forth by Self-interest. Then we shall be enabled to say with truth that the two motive principles of our nature tend towards the same result—the General Good; and it will be impossible to deny Moral Power to self-interest, and the transactions which spring from it, as far at least as their effects are concerned.

Consider the relations of man to man, family to family, province to province, nation to nation, hemisphere to hemisphere, capitalist to labourer, the man of property to the man of no property,—it seems evident to me that it is impossible to resolve the social problem from any one of these points of view, or even to enter upon its solution, before choosing between these two maxims:—

The profit of one is the loss of another;
The profit of one is the gain of another.

For if nature has arranged matters so that antagonism is the law of free transactions, our only resource is to vanquish nature and stifle Freedom. If, on the other hand, these free transactions are harmonious, that is to say, if they tend to ameliorate and equalize the conditions of men, our efforts must be confined to allowing nature to act, and maintaining the rights of human Liberty.

This is the reason why I conjure the young people to whom this work is dedicated to scrutinize with care the formulas which it lays down, and to analyze the peculiar nature and effects of Exchange. I hope yet to find at least one among them who will be able to demonstrate rigorously this proposition: "*The good of each tends to the good of all, as the good of all tends to the good of each;*" and who will, moreover, be able to impress this truth upon men's minds by rendering the proof of it simple, lucid, and

irrefragable. The man who does this will have resolved the social problem, and be the benefactor of the human race.

Depend upon it, that according as this axiom is true or false, the natural laws of society are harmonious or antagonistic; and that according as they are harmonious or antagonistic, it is our interest to conform to them or to deviate from them. Were it once thoroughly demonstrated, then, that under the empire of freedom men's interests harmonize and favour each other, all the efforts which we now see governments making to disturb the action of these natural social laws we should see directed to giving them force, or rather, no efforts whatever would then be necessary, and all they would have to do would be to abstain from interfering. In what does the restraining action of governments consist? We may infer it from the design they have in view. What is that design? To remedy the Inequality which is supposed to spring from Liberty. Now, there is only one way of re-establishing the equilibrium, namely, *to take from one in order to give to another.* Such, in fact, is the mission which governments have arrogated to themselves, or have received; and it is a rigorous consequence of the formula, that *the gain of one is the loss of another.* If that axiom be true, Force must repair the evils of Liberty. Thus governments, instituted for the protection of liberty and property, have undertaken the task of violating liberty and property in every shape; and they have done so consistently, if it be in liberty and property that the germ and principle of evil reside. Hence we see them everywhere engaged in the artificial displacement and redistribution of labour, capital, and responsibility.

On the other hand, an incalculable amount of intellectual force is thrown away in the pursuit of artificial social organizations. *To take from one in order to give to another*, to violate both liberty and property, is a very simple design, but the means of carrying out that design may be varied to infinity. Hence arise multitudes of systems, which strike the producing classes with terror, since from the very nature of the object they have in view, they menace all existing interests.

Thus arbitrary and complex systems of government, the negation of liberty and property, the antagonism of classes and nations, all these are logically included in the axiom, that *the gain of one is the loss of another.* And, for the same reason, simplicity in government, respect for individual dignity, freedom of labour and

exchange, peace among nations, security for person and property, are all contained and shut up in this truth—Interests are harmonious. They are so, however, only on one condition, which is, that this truth should be generally admitted.

But it is very far from being so. On reading what I have said on this subject many people will be led to say, You break through an open door. Who ever thought of contesting seriously the superiority of Exchange to Isolation? In what book, unless indeed in the works of Rousseau, have you encountered this strange paradox?

Those who stop me with this reflection forget only two things, two symptoms, or rather two aspects of modern society, the doctrines with which theorists inundate us, and the practice which governments impose on us. It is quite impossible that the harmony of interests can be universally recognised, since, on the one hand, public force is constantly engaged in interfering to disturb natural combinations, while, on the other, the great complaint which is made against the ruling power is, that it does not interfere enough.

The question is this, Are the evils (I do not speak here of evils which arise from our native infirmity)—are the evils to which society is subject imputable to the action of natural social laws, or to our disturbance of that action?

Now, here we have two co-existent facts, Evil,—and Public Force, engaged to counteract the natural social laws. Is the first of these facts the consequence of the second? For my own part, I believe so; I should even say, I am certain of it. But at the same time I can attest this, that in proportion as evil is developed, governments invariably seek for a remedy in new disturbances of the natural laws, and theorists reproach them with not going far enough. Am I not thence entitled to conclude that they have but little confidence in these laws?

Undoubtedly, if the question is between Isolation and Exchange we are at one. But if the question be between free and compulsory exchange, does the same thing hold? Is there nothing forced, factitious, restrained, constrained, in France, in the manner in which services which have relation to trade, to credit, to conveyances, to the arts, to education, to religion, are exchanged? Are labour and capital distributed naturally between agriculture and manufactures? When existing interests are disturbed, are they allowed of their own accord to return to their natural chan-

nels? Do we not encounter trammels and obstacles on all sides? Are there not a hundred professions which are interdicted to the majority of the people? Is the Roman-catholic not *forced* to pay for the services of the Jewish Rabbi, and the Jew for the services of the Catholic priest? Is there a single man in France who has received the education which his parents would have given him had they been free? Are not our minds, our manners, our ideas, our employments, fashioned under the *régime* of the arbitrary, or at least of the artificial? Now, I ask, whether thus to disturb the free exchange of services is not to abjure and deny the harmony of interests? On what ground am I robbed of my liberty, unless it be that it is judged hurtful to others? Is it pretended that it is injurious to myself? This would be but to add one antagonism the more. And only think! in what a situation should we find ourselves if nature had placed in each man's heart a permanent irrepressible spring of action, urging him to injure those around him, and at the same time to injure himself?

Alas! we have tried everything—when shall we make trial of the simplest thing of all—Liberty? Liberty in all that does not offend against justice—liberty to live, advance, improve—the free exercise of our faculties—the free interchange of services. A beautiful and solemn spectacle it would have been, had the Power which sprang from the revolution of February thus addressed our citizens:—

"You have invested me with the public Force. I shall apply it exclusively to those things in which the intervention of Force is permissible, and there is but one—Justice. I shall force every one to confine himself within the bounds of right. You may work freely and as you please during the day, and sleep in peace at night. I have taken under my charge the security of person and property—that is my mission, and I will fulfil it—*but I accept no other*. Let there then be no longer any misunderstanding between us. Henceforth you shall pay me only the light tribute which is necessary for the maintenance of order and the administration of justice. Keep in mind that henceforth every man must depend upon himself for his subsistence and advancement. Turn no longer your longing eyes to me. Ask me no longer for wealth, for employment, for credit, for education, for religion, for morality. Never forget that the mainspring of your development is in yourselves. As for me, I never act but through the intervention of force. I have nothing, absolutely nothing, but what I

derive from you, and for this reason I cannot confer even the smallest advantage on one except at the expense of another. Cultivate your fields, then, manufacture and export your products, carry on trade, afford each other credit, render and receive services freely, educate your children, set them out in life, cultivate the arts, improve your minds, refine and purify your tastes and sentiments, unite, form industrial and charitable associations, join your efforts for your individual good and that of the public, follow your inclinations, fulfil your destinies by the free exercise of your powers, your ideas, and your foresight. Expect from me only two things—Liberty and Security—and depend upon it you cannot ask me for a third without losing the other two."

I am thoroughly persuaded that if the revolution of February had proclaimed these principles we never should have had another revolution. Is it possible to conceive that citizens, left perfectly free in all other respects, would conspire to overturn a Power whose action was limited to the satisfaction of the most pressing, the most deeply felt of all our social requirements, the requirements of Justice?

But it was unfortunately impossible for the National Assembly to adopt this course, or make these sentiments heard. They were not in accordance either with the ideas of the Assembly or the expectations of the public. They would have terrified society as much as the proclamation of Communism. To be responsible to ourselves, forsooth! To trust to the State only for the maintenance of order and peace! To expect from it neither wealth nor knowledge! To be able no longer to make it responsible for our faults, our folly, our imprudence! To trust only to ourselves for the means of subsistence and physical amelioration, or moral and intellectual improvement! What on earth is to become of us? Is not society on the eve of being invaded by poverty, ignorance, error, irreligion, and perversity?

We allow that such undoubtedly would have been the fears which would have manifested themselves on all sides had the revolution of February proclaimed Liberty, that is to say, the reign of the natural laws of society. Then we were either unacquainted with these laws, or we wanted confidence in them. We could not get rid of the idea that the motives and springs of action which God has implanted in the mind of man are essentially perverse; that rectitude resides nowhere but in the views and intentions of the governing power; that the tendencies

of human nature lead to disorganization, to anarchy,—in a word, we believed in the inevitable antagonism of interests.

So far was the revolution of February from displaying any tendency towards a natural organization, that never were the hopes and ideas of French society so decidedly turned to artificial combinations as at that epoch. Which of these combinations was in most favour? I really cannot very well tell. The business, in the language of the day, was to make experiments—*Faciamus experimentum in corpore vili.* Such was their contempt for individuality, so thoroughly did they assimilate human nature to inert matter, that they talked of making social experiments with men, just as we make chemical experiments with acids and alkalies. The first tentative was begun at the Luxembourg, we know with what success. Erelong the Constituent Assembly instituted a Committee of Labour, in which a thousand social schemes were engulfed and swallowed up. A Fourierist representative seriously demanded lands and money (he would soon have asked for men also) to enable him to manipulate his model society. Another *Egalitaire* representative offered his recipe, which was rejected. The manufacturers were more lucky, and succeeded in maintaining theirs. In the meantime, the Legislative Assembly named a commission to organize "assistance."

Now, what strikes us with surprise in all this is, that the Ruling Power, for the sake of its own stability, did not from time to time thus enter its protest:—"You are habituating thirty-six millions of men to regard the State as responsible for all the good or evil that may befall them in this world. At this rate, Government is impossible."

At any rate, if these various social inventions, dignified with the high sounding title of organization, differ from each other in their manner of proceeding, they are all founded on the same principle: Take from one to give to another. Now such a principle clearly could not meet with such universal sympathy from the people, unless they were thoroughly convinced that men's interests are naturally antagonistic, and that the tendencies of human nature are essentially perverse.

To take from one to give to another! I know well that things have gone on in this way for a long time. But before you set yourselves to imagine various means of realizing this whimsical principle for the remedy of existing distress, would it not be well to inquire whether that distress has not proceeded from the very

fact that this principle in a certain form has been realized already? Before seeking a remedy in new disturbances of the natural social laws, should you not make sure that such perturbations do not themselves constitute the very evil from which society suffers, and which it is your object to cure?

To take from one in order to give to another! Just allow me to mark here the danger and the absurdity, in an economical point of view, of this so-called *social* aspiration, which, fermenting among the masses of our population, broke forth with so terrific a force in the revolution of February.

Where society consists of several grades, we are apt to think that people of the highest rank enjoy Privileges or Monopolies at the expense of all the other members of the community. This is odious, but it is not absurd.

The second grade, the class immediately below the first, will not fail to attack and batter down monopolies; and, with the assistance of the masses, they will succeed sooner or later in bringing about a Revolution. In that case, power passes into their hands, and they still think that power implies Monopoly. This is still odious, but it is not absurd, at least it is not impracticable; for Monopolies are possible as long as there is, below the grade which enjoys them, a lower stratum—namely, the public at large, which supports and feeds them. If the third and fourth grade succeed, in their turn, in effecting a revolution, they will, if they can, so arrange as to make the most of the masses, by means of privileges or monopolies skilfully combined. But then the masses, emaciated, ground down, trampled upon, must also have their revolution. Why? What are they going to do? You think, perhaps, that they are going to abolish all monopolies and privileges, and to inaugurate the reign of universal justice; that they are about to exclaim—away with restrictions—away with shackles and trammels—away with monopolies—away with Government interferences for the profit of certain classes; begone taxes and grinding impositions; down with political and diplomatic intrigues? Not at all. They have quite another aim. They become their own solicitors, and in their turn demand to be *privileged!* The public at large, imitating their superiors, ask for monopolies! They urge their right to employment, their right to credit, their right to education, their right to assistance! But at whose expense? They are easy on that score. They feel only that, if they are ensured employment, credit, education for their children,

repose for their old days, and all gratis, they will be exceedingly happy; and, truly, no one disputes it. But is it possible? Alas! no; and this is the reason why I say that here the odious disappears, and the absurd has reached its climax.

Monopolies to the masses! Good people, reflect a little on the vicious circle in which you are placing yourselves. Monopoly implies some one to enjoy it, and some one to pay for it. We can understand a privileged man, or a privileged class, but not a privileged people. Is there below you a still lower stratum of society upon which you can throw back the burden? Will you never comprehend the whimsical mystification of which you are the dupes? Will you never understand that the State can give you nothing with the one hand but what it has taken from you with the other? that, far from there being for you in this combination any possible increase of prosperity, the final result of the operation must be an arbitrary Government, more vexatious, more exacting, more uncertain, more expensive;—heavier taxes,—more injustice, more offensive favouritism,—liberty more restrained,—power thrown away,—occupations, labour, and capital displaced,—covetousness excited,—discontent provoked,—and individual energy extinguished?

The upper classes have got alarmed, and not without reason, at this unhappy disposition of the masses. They see in it the germ of incessant revolutions; for what Government can hold together which has ventured to say—"I am in possession of force, and I will employ it to support everybody at the expense of everybody? I undertake to become responsible for the general happiness." But is not the alarm which has seized these classes a just and merited punishment? Have they not themselves set the people the fatal example of that grasping disposition of which they now complain? Have they not had their own eyes perpetually turned to the treasury? Have they ever failed to secure some monopoly, some privilege, great or small, to manufactures, to banks, to mines, to landed property, to the arts, even to the means of diversion, to the ballet, to the opera, to everything and everybody in short; except to the industry of the people—to manual labour? Have they not multiplied beyond bounds public employments, in order to increase, at the expense of the people, their own resources? and is there at this day a single head of a family in France who is not on the outlook for a *place* for his son? Have they ever endeavoured to get rid of any one of the acknowledged inequalities of taxation?

Have they not for a long time turned to account everything, even the electoral franchise? And yet they are astonished and horrified that the people should adopt the same course. When the spirit of mendicity has so long infected the wealthy orders, how can we suppose that it will not penetrate to the heart of the suffering masses?

However, a great Revolution has taken place. Political power, the power of making the laws, the disposal of the public force, has passed virtually, if not yet in fact, into the hands of the people along with universal suffrage. Thus the people, who have proposed the problem for solution, will be called upon to solve it themselves; and woe to the country, if, following the example which has been set them, they seek its solution in Privilege, which is always an invasion of another's rights. They will find themselves mistaken, and the mistake will bring with it a great lesson; for if it be possible to violate the rights of the many for the benefit of the few, how can we violate the rights of all for the benefit of all? But at what cost will this lesson be taught us? And, in order to obviate so frightful a danger, what ought the upper classes to do? Two things—renounce all privileges and monopolies themselves, and enlighten the masses, for there are only two things which can save society—Justice and Knowledge. They ought to inquire with earnestness whether they do not enjoy some monopoly or other, in order that they may renounce it—whether they do not profit by some artificial inequalities, in order that they may efface them—whether Pauperism is not in some measure attributable to a disturbance of the natural social laws, in order that they may put an end to it. They should be able to hold out their hands to the people, and say to them, These hands are full, but they are clean. Is this what they actually do? If I am not very much mistaken, they do just the reverse. They begin by guarding their monopolies, and we have seen them even turning the revolution to profit by attempting to extend these monopolies. After having deprived themselves of even the possibility of speaking the truth and appealing to principles, they endeavour to vindicate their consistency by engaging to treat the people as they have treated themselves, and dazzle them with the bait of Privilege. Only, they think themselves very knowing in conceding at present only a small privilege, the right to "assistance," in the hope of diverting them from demanding a greater one—the right to employment. They do not perceive that to extend and

systematize more and more the maxim, "Take from one to give to another," is only to strengthen the illusion which creates difficulties for the present and dangers for the future.

We must not exaggerate, however. When the superior classes seek in privilege a remedy for the evils which privilege has caused, they are sincere, and act, I am convinced, rather from ignorance than from any desire to commit injustice. It is an irreparable misfortune that the governments which have succeeded each other in France have invariably discouraged the teaching of Political Economy. And it is a still greater misfortune that University Education fills all our heads with Roman prejudices; in other words, with all that is repugnant to social truth. This is what leads the upper classes astray. It is the fashion at present to declaim against these classes. For my own part, I believe that at no period have their intentions been more benevolent. I believe that they ardently desire to solve the social Problem. I believe that they would do more than renounce their privileges,—that they would sacrifice willingly, in works of charity, a part of the property they have acquired, if by that means they were satisfied that an end could be put to the sufferings of the working classes. It may be said, no doubt, that they are actuated by interest or fear, and that it is no great generosity to abandon a part of their fortune to save the remainder,—that it is, in fact, but the vulgar prudence of a man who insures his property against fire. But let us not thus calumniate human nature. Why should we refuse to recognise a motive less egotistical? Is it not very natural that the democratic sentiments which prevail in our country should render men alive to the sufferings of their brethren? But whatever may be the dominant sentiment, it cannot be denied that everything by which public opinion is influenced—philosophy, literature, poetry, the drama, the pulpit, the tribune, the daily press,—all these organs of opinion reveal not only a desire, but an ardent longing, on the part of the wealthier classes to resolve the great problem. Why, then, is there no movement on the part of our Legislative Assemblies? Because they are ignorant. Political Economy proposes to them this solution:—PUBLIC JUSTICE,—PRIVATE CHARITY. But they go off upon a wrong scent, and, obeying socialist influences, without being aware of the fact, they give charity a place in the statute-book, thereby banishing justice from it, and destroying by the same act private charity, which is ever prompt to recede before a compulsory poor-rate.

Why, then, do our legislators thus run counter to all sound notions? Why do they not leave things in their proper place,—Sympathy in its natural domain, which is Liberty,—Justice in its own, which is Law? Why do they not leave law to do its own exclusive work in furthering justice? Is it that they have no love of justice? No; it is that they have no confidence in it. Justice is Liberty and Property. But they are Socialists without knowing it; and, for the progressive diminution of poverty, and the indefinite expansion of wealth, let them say what they will, they have no faith either in liberty or property, nor, consequently, in justice. This is why we see them, in the sincerity of their hearts, seeking the realization of what is Good by the perpetual violation of what is Right.

Natural social laws are the phenomena, taken in the aggregate, and considered in reference both to their motives and their results, which govern the transactions of men in a state of freedom.

That being granted, the question is, Are we to allow these laws to act, or are we to hinder them from acting?

The question, in fact, comes to this:

Are we to leave every man master of his liberty and property, his right to produce, and exchange his produce, as he chooses, whether to his benefit or detriment; or are we to interfere by means of law, which is Force, for the protection of these rights? Or, can we hope to secure a greater amount of social happiness by violating liberty and property, by interfering with and regulating labour, by disturbing exchanges, and shifting responsibility?

In other words:

Is Law to enforce rigorous Justice, or to be the instrument of Spoliation, organized with more or less adroitness?

It is very evident that the solution of these questions depends upon our knowledge and study of the natural laws of society. We cannot pronounce conclusively upon them until we have discovered whether property, liberty, the combination of services freely and voluntarily exchanged, lead to improvement and material prosperity, as the economists believe, or to ruin and degradation, as the socialists affirm.

In the first case, social evils must be attributed to disturbances of the natural laws, to legal violations of liberty and property, and these disturbances and violations must be put an end to. In that case Political Economy is right.

In the second case, it may be said, we have not yet had enough

of Government interference. Forced and factitious combinations have not yet sufficiently superseded free and natural combinations. These three fatal principles, Justice, Liberty, Property, have still too powerful a sway. Our legislators have not yet attacked them boldly enough. We have not yet acted sufficiently on the maxim of *taking from one in order to give to another*. Hitherto we have taken from the many to give to the few. Now, we must take from all to give to all. In a word, we must organize Spoliation, and from Socialism must come our salvation.

V.

OF VALUE.

ALL dissertations are wearisome—a dissertation on Value the most wearisome of all.

What unpractised writer, who has had to face an Economic problem, but has tried to resolve it without reference to any definition of value?

Yet he soon finds he has engaged in a vain attempt. The theory of Value is to Political Economy what numeration is to arithmetic. In what inextricable confusion would not Bezout have landed himself, if, to save labour to his pupils, he had undertaken to teach them the four rules and proportion, without having previously explained the value which the figures derive from their form and position?

The truth is, if the reader could only foresee the beautiful consequences deducible from the theory of Value, he would undertake the labour of mastering the first principles of Economical Science with the same cheerfulness that one submits to the drudgery of Geometry, in prospect of the magnificent field which it opens to our intelligence.

But this intuitive foresight is not to be expected; and the more pains I should take to establish the distinction between Value and Utility, or between Value and Labour, in order to show how natural it is that this should form a stumbling-block at the very threshold of the science, the more wearisome I should become. The reader would see in such a discussion only barren and idle subtleties, calculated at best to satisfy the curiosity of Economists by profession.

You are inquiring laboriously, it may be said, whether wealth consists in the Utility of things, or in their Value, or in their rarity. Is not this like the question of the schoolmen, Does form reside in the substance or in the accident? Are you not afraid

that some street Molière will hold you up to public ridicule at the Théâtre des Variétés?

Yet truth obliges me to say that, in an economical point of view, Society is Exchange. The primary element of Exchange is the notion of *Value*, so that every truth and every error which this word introduces into men's minds is a social truth or error.

I undertake in this work to demonstrate the Harmony of those laws of Providence which govern human society. What makes these laws harmonious and not discordant is, that all principles, all motives, all springs of action, all interests, co-operate towards a grand final result, which humanity will never reach by reason of its native *imperfection*, but to which it will always approximate more and more by reason of its unlimited *capability of improvement*. And that result is, the indefinite approximation of all classes towards a level, which is always rising; in other words, the *equalization* of individuals in the general *amelioration*.

But to attain my object, I must explain two things, namely,

1*st*, That *Utility* has a tendency to become more and more *gratuitous*, more and more *common*, as it gradually recedes from the domain of individual *appropriation*.

2*d*, That *Value*, on the other hand, which alone is capable of appropriation, which alone constitutes property legitimately and in fact, has a tendency to diminish more and more in relation to the utility to which it is attached.

Such a demonstration—founded on Property, but only on the property of which Value is the subject, and on Community, but only on the community of utility,—such a demonstration, I say, must satisfy and reconcile all schools, by conceding to them that all have had a glimpse of the truth, but only of partial truth, regarded from different points of view.

Economists! you defend property. There is in the social order no other property than that of which *Value* is the subject, and that is immovable and unassailable.

Communists! you dream of Community. You have got it. The social order renders all *utilities* common, provided the exchange of those values which have been appropriated is free.

You are like architects who dispute about a monument of which each has seen only one side. They don't see *ill*, but they don't see *all*. To make them agree, it is only necessary to ask them to walk round the edifice.

But how am I to reconstruct the social edifice, so as to exhibit

to mankind all its beautiful harmony, if I reject its two corner stones, Utility and Value? How can I bring about the desired reconciliation of various schools upon the platform of truth if I shun the analysis of these two ideas, although the dissidence has arisen from the unhappy confusion which they have caused?

I have felt this kind of introduction necessary, in order, if possible, to secure from the reader a moment's attention, and relieve him from fatigue and ennui. I am much mistaken if the consoling beauty of the consequences will not amply make up for the dryness of the premises. Had Newton allowed himself to be repulsed at the outset by a distaste for elementary mathematics, never would his heart have beat with rapture on beholding the harmonies of the celestial mechanism; and I maintain that it is only necessary to make our way manfully to an acquaintance with certain first principles, in order to be convinced that God has displayed in the social mechanism goodness no less touching, simplicity no less admirable, splendour no less magnificent.

In the first chapter we viewed man as both *active* and *passive*, and we saw that *Want* and *Satisfaction*, acting on *sensibility* alone, were in their own nature personal, peculiar, and intransmissible; that *Effort*, on the contrary, the connecting link between Want and Satisfaction, the *mean* term between the motive principle of action and the end we have in view, proceeding from our *activity*, our spontaneity, our will, was susceptible of conventions and of transmission. I know that, metaphysically, no one can contest this assertion, and maintain that Effort also is personal. I have no desire to enter the territory of ideology, and I hope that my view of the subject will be admitted without controversy when put in this vulgar form:—We cannot *feel* the wants of others—we cannot *feel* the satisfactions of others; but we can *render service* one to another.

It is this transmission of efforts, this exchange of services, which forms the subject of Political Economy; and since, on the other hand, economical science is condensed and summed up in the word *Value*, of which it is only a lengthened explanation, it follows that the notion of value would be imperfectly, erroneously, conceived if we were to found it upon the extreme phenomena of our sensibility —namely, our *Wants* and *Satisfactions*—phenomena which are personal, intransmissible, and *incommensurable* as between two individuals, in place of founding it on the manifestations of our *activity*, upon *efforts*, upon reciprocal *services*, which are inter-

changed because they are susceptible of being compared, appreciated, *estimated*, and which are capable of being estimated precisely because they are capable of being interchanged.

In the same chapter we arrived at the following formulas:—

"*Utility* (the property which certain things and certain acts have of serving us, of being useful to us) is complex,—one part we owe to the action of nature, another to the action of man."—"With reference to a given result, the more nature has done, the less remains for human action to do."—"The co-operation of nature is essentially *gratuitous*—the co-operation of man, whether intellectual or muscular, exchanged or not, collective or solitary, is essentially *onerous*, as indeed the word *Effort* implies."

And as what is *gratuitous* cannot possess *value*, since the idea of *value* implies *onerous* acquisition, it follows that the notion of Value would be still erroneously conceived, if we were to extend it, in whole or in part, to the gifts or to the co-operation of nature, instead of restricting it exclusively to human co-operation.

Thus, from both sides, by two different roads, we arrive at this conclusion, that *value* must have reference to the *efforts* which men make in order to obtain the *satisfaction* of their *wants*.

In the third Chapter we have established that man cannot exist in a state of isolation. But if, by an effort of imagination, we fancy him placed in that chimerical situation, that state *contrary to nature*, which the writers of the eighteenth century extolled as the *state of nature*, we shall not fail to see that it does not disclose to us the idea of Value, although it presents the manifestation of the active principle which we have termed *effort*. The reason is obvious. Value implies comparison, appreciation, *estimation*, measure. In order that two things should measure each other, it is necessary that they be commensurable, and, in order to that, they must be of the same kind. In a state of isolation, with what could we compare effort? With want? With satisfaction? In that case, we could go no farther than to pronounce that the effort was more or less appropriate, more or less opportune. In the social state, what we compare (and it is this comparison which gives rise to the idea of Value) is the effort of one man with the effort of another man,—two phenomena of the same nature, and, consequently, *commensurable*.

Thus, the definition of the word Value, in order to be exact, must have reference not only to human efforts, but likewise to those efforts which are exchanged or exchangeable. Exchange

does more than exhibit and measure values — it gives them existence. I do not mean to say that it gives existence to the acts and the things which are exchanged, but it imparts to their existence the notion of *value.*

Now, when two men transfer to each other their present efforts, or make over mutually the results of their anterior efforts, they *serve* each other; they render each other reciprocal *service.*

I say, then, VALUE IS THE RELATION OF TWO SERVICES EXCHANGED.

The idea of *value* entered into the world the first time that a man having said to his brother, Do this for me, and I shall do that for you—they have come to an agreement; for then, for the first time, we could say—The two *services* exchanged are *worth each other.*

It is singular enough that the true theory of value, which we search for in vain in many a ponderous volume, is to be found in Florian's beautiful fable of *l'Aveugle et le Paralytique,*—

> Aidons—nous mutuellement,
> La charge des malheurs en sera plus légère.
> . . . . . A nous deux
> Nous possédons le bien à chacun nécessaire.
> J'ai des jambes, et vous des yeux.
> Moi, je vais vous porter; vous, vous serez mon guide:
> Ainsi, sans que jamais notre amitié décide
> Qui de nous deux remplit le plus utile emploi,
> Je marcherai pour vous, vous y verrez pour moi.

Here you have value discovered and defined. Here you have it in its rigorous economic exactitude, excepting the touching trait relative to friendship, which carries us into another sphere, that of sympathy. We may conceive two unfortunates rendering each other reciprocal *service,* without inquiring too curiously *which of the two discharged the most useful employment.* The exceptional situation imagined by the fabulist explains sufficiently that the principle of sympathy, acting with great force, comes to absorb, so to speak, the minute appreciation of the services exchanged—an appreciation, however, which is indispensable in order to disengage completely the idea of Value. That idea would be complete if all men, or the majority of them, were struck with paralysis or blindness; for the inexorable law of supply and demand would then predominate, and, causing the permanent sacrifice accepted

by him who fulfils the more useful employment to disappear, would restore the transaction to the domain of justice.

We are all blind or impotent in some respects, and we soon come to understand that, by assisting each other, *the burden of misfortune is lightened.* Hence EXCHANGE. We labour in order to feed, clothe, shelter, enlighten, cure, defend, instruct one another. Hence reciprocal SERVICES. We compare, we discuss, we *estimate* or *appreciate* these services. Hence VALUE.

A multitude of circumstances may augment the relative importance of a Service. We find it greater or less, according as it is more or less useful to us—according as a greater or less number of people are disposed to render it to us—according as it exacts from them more or less labour, trouble, skill, time, previous study,—and according as it saves more or less of these to ourselves. Value depends not only on these circumstances, but on the judgment we form of them; for it may happen, and it happens frequently, that we esteem a service very highly because we judge it very useful, while in reality it is hurtful. This is the reason why vanity, ignorance, error, exert a certain influence on the essentially elastic and flexible relation which we denominate *value;* and we may affirm that the appreciation of services tends to approximate more to absolute truth and justice in proportion as men become more enlightened, more moral, and more refined.

Hitherto the principle of Value has been sought for in one of those circumstances which augment or which diminish it, materiality, durableness, utility, scarcity, labour, difficulty of acquisition, judgment, &c., and hence a false direction has been given to the science from the beginning; for the accident which modifies the phenomenon is not the phenomenon itself. Moreover, each author has constituted himself the sponsor, so to speak, of some special circumstance which he thinks preponderates,—the constant result of generalizing; for all is in all, and there is nothing which we cannot comprehend under a term by means of extending its sense. Thus the principle of value, according to Adam Smith, resides in materiality and durability; according to Jean Baptiste Say, in utility; according to Ricardo, in labour; according to Senior, in rarity; according to Storch, in the judgment we form, &c.

The consequence has been what might have been expected. These authors have unwittingly injured the authority and dignity of the science by appearing to contradict each other; while in reality each is right, as from his own point of view. Besides,

they have involved the first principles of Political Economy in a labyrinth of inextricable difficulties; for the same words, as used by these authors, no longer represent the same ideas; and, moreover, although a circumstance may be proclaimed fundamental, other circumstances stand out too prominently to be neglected, and definitions are thus constantly enlarged.

The object of the present work is not controversy, but exposition. I explain what I myself see, not what others have seen. I cannot avoid, however, calling the attention of the reader to the circumstances in which the foundation of Value has hitherto been sought for. But, first of all, I must bring Value itself before him in a series of examples, for it is by divers applications that the mind lays hold of a theory.

I shall demonstrate how all is definitely resolved into a barter of services; but it is necessary to keep in mind what has been said on the subject of barter in the preceding chapter. It is rarely simple—sometimes it forms a circular or round-about transaction among several parties,—most frequently, by the intervention of money, it resolves itself into two factors, *sale* and *purchase;* but as this complication does not change its nature, I may be permitted, for the sake of perspicuity, to assume the barter to be direct and immediate. This will lead to no mistake as to the nature of Value.

We are all born with an imperious material want, which must be satisfied under pain of death, I mean that of breathing. On the other hand, we all exist in a medium which, in general, supplies that want without the intervention of any effort on our part. Atmospheric air, then, has utility, without having *value.* It has no Value, because, requiring no Effort, it gives rise to no service. To render a service to any one is to save him trouble; and where it is not necessary to take pains in order to realize a satisfaction, no trouble can be saved.

But if a man descend to the bottom of a river in a diving-bell, a foreign substance is interposed between the air and his lungs, and, in order to re-establish the communication, a pump must be employed. Here there is an effort to make, pains to take, and the man below desires the exertion, for it is a matter of life or death, and he cannot possibly secure to himself a greater *service.*

Instead of making this effort himself, he calls on me to make it for him, and, in order to induce me to do so, he undertakes in turn to

make an exertion from which I may reap satisfaction. We discuss the matter, and come to an agreement. Now, what do we discover here? two wants, two satisfactions, which are not inconsistent with each other; two efforts, which are the subject of a voluntary transaction; two *services*, which are exchanged,—and *value* makes its appearance.

Now, we are told that utility is the foundation of value; and as utility is inherent in the air, we are led to think that it is the same in regard to value. There is here an evident confusion of ideas. The air, from its nature, has physical properties in harmony with one of our physical organs, the lungs. The portion which I draw from the atmosphere in order to fill the diving-bell does not change its nature—it is still oxygen and azote. No new physical quality is combined with it, no reacting power brings out of it a new element called *value*. *That* springs exclusively from the service rendered.

If, in laying down the general principle, that Utility is the foundation of Value, you mean that the Service has value because it is useful to him who receives it and pays for it, I allow the truth of what you say. It is a truism implied in the very word *service*.

But we must not confound the utility of the air with the utility of the service. They are two utilities distinct from each other, different in nature, different in kind, which bear no proportion to one another, and have no necessary relation. There are circumstances in which, with very slight exertion, by rendering a very small service, or saving very little trouble, I may bring within the reach of another an article of very great intrinsic *utility*.

Take the case of the diving-bell, and consider how the parties to the supposed bargain manage to estimate the value of the *service* rendered by the one to the other in supplying him with atmospheric air. We must have a point of comparison, and that point of comparison can only be in the *service* which the diver renders in return. Their reciprocal demands will depend on their relative situation, on the intensity of their desires, on the greater or less need they have of each other, and on a multitude of circumstances which demonstrate that the value is in the Service, since it increases with the service.

The reader may easily vary the hypothesis, so as to convince himself that the Value is not necessarily proportionate to the intensity of the efforts,—a remark which I set down here as a connecting link in the chain of reasoning, and of which I shall

afterwards have occasion to make use; for my object is to prove that Value no more resides in labour than it does in utility.

Nature has so constituted me that I must die if I am deprived of an opportunity, from time to time, of quenching my thirst, and the well is a league from the village. For this reason, I take the trouble every morning to go thither to fetch the water of which I have need, for in water I have recognised those *useful* qualities which are calculated to assuage the suffering called thirst. Want, Effort, Satisfaction—we have them all here. I have found Utility—I have not yet found Value.

But, as my neighbour goes also to the fountain, I say to him—"*Save me the pains* of this journey—*render me the service* of bringing me water. During the time you are so occupied, I shall do something for you, I shall teach your child to spell." This arrangement suits us both. Here is an exchange of two services, and we are enabled to pronounce that the one is *worth* the other. The things compared here are two efforts, not two wants and two satisfactions; for by what common standard should we compare the benefit of drinking water and that of learning to spell?

By and by, I say to my neighbour—"Your child troubles me—I should like better to do something else for you. You shall continue to bring me water, and I shall give you twopence." If the proposal is agreed to, the Economist may, without fear of mistake, pronounce that *the service* IS WORTH *twopence.*

Afterwards, my neighbour no longer waits to be requested. He knows by experience that every day I want water. He anticipates my wishes. At the same time, he provides water for the other villagers. In short, he becomes a water merchant. It is then that we begin to say, *the water* IS WORTH *twopence.*

Has the water, then, changed its nature? Has the Value, which was but now in the service, become materialized and incorporated in the water, as if it were a new chemical element? Has a slight modification in the form of the arrangement between my neighbour and me had the power to displace the principle of *value* and change its nature? I am not purist enough to find fault with your saying that the *water is worth twopence*, just as you say *the sun sets.* But we must remember that metaphors and metonymies do not affect the truth of facts; and that, in strict scientific language, value can no more be said to reside in the water, than the sun can be said to go to rest in the sea.

Let us attribute, then, to things the peculiar qualities which

belong to them—to air, to water, *utility*—to services, *value*. We may say with propriety that water is *useful*, because it has the property of allaying thirst; and it is the service which *has value*, because it is the subject of a convention previously debated and discussed. So true is this, that if the well is brought nearer, or removed to a greater distance, the Utility of the water remains the same, but its Value is diminished or increased. Why? because the *service* is less or greater. The *value*, then, is in the *service*, seeing that it is increased or diminished according as the service is increased or diminished.

The *diamond* makes a great figure in works of Political Economy. It is adduced as an illustration of the laws of Value, or of the supposed disturbance of those laws. It is a brilliant weapon with which all the schools do battle. The English school asserts that "Value resides in labour." The French school exhibits a diamond, and says—"Here is a commodity which exacts no labour and yet is of immense value." The French school affirms that the foundation of value is utility, and the English school immediately brings forward the diamond in opposition to the illustrations drawn from air, light, and water. "The air is very useful," says the English Economist, "but it possesses no value; the *utility* of the diamond is almost inappreciable, and yet it possesses more *value* than the whole atmosphere;" and the reader is inclined to say with Henri Quatre—"In sooth, they are both right." They end by landing themselves in an error more fatal than both the others, and are forced to avow that *value* resides in the works of nature, and that that value is *material*.

My definition, as it seems to me, gets rid of these anomalies, and is confirmed rather than invalidated by the illustration which has been adduced.

I take a walk along the sea-beach, and I find by chance a magnificent diamond. I am thus put in possession of a great *value*. Why? Am I about to confer a great benefit on the human race? Have I devoted myself to a long and laborious work? Neither the one nor the other. Why, then, does this diamond possess so much value? Undoubtedly because the person to whom I transfer it considers that I have rendered him a great *service*,—all the greater that many rich people desire it, and that I alone can render it. The grounds of his judgment may be controverted—be it so. It may be founded on pride, on vanity—granted again. But this judgment has, nevertheless, been formed by a

man who is disposed to act upon it, and that is sufficient for my argument.

Far from the judgment being based on a reasonable appreciation of *utility*, we may allow that the very reverse is the case. Ostentation makes great sacrifices for what is utterly *useless*.

In this case, the value, far from bearing a necessary proportion to the labour *performed* by the person who renders the service, may be said rather to bear proportion to the labour *saved* to the person who receives it. This general law of value, which has not, so far as I know, been observed by theoretical writers, nevertheless prevails universally in practice. We shall explain afterwards the admirable mechanism by which value tends to proportion itself to labour when it is free; but it is not the less true that it has its principle and foundation less in the effort of the person who *serves* than in the effort saved to him who *is served*.

The transaction relative to the diamond may be supposed to give rise to the following dialogue:—

"Give me your diamond, Sir."

"With all my heart; give me in exchange your labour for an entire year."

"Your acquisition has not cost you a minute's work."

"Very well, Sir, try to find a similar lucky minute."

"Yes; but, in strict equity, the exchange ought to be one of *equal labour*."

"No; in strict equity, you put a value on your own services, and I upon mine; I don't force you; why should you lay a constraint upon me? Give me a whole year's labour, or seek out a diamond for yourself."

"But that might entail upon me ten years' work, and would probably end in nothing. It would be wiser and more profitable to devote these ten years to another employment."

"It is precisely on that account that I imagined I was rendering you a *service* in asking for only one year's work. I thus save you nine, and that is the reason why I attach great *value* to the *service*. If I appear to you exacting, it is because you regard only the labour which I have performed; but consider also the labour which I save you, and you will find me reasonable in my demand."

"It is not the less true that you profit by a work of nature."

"And if I were to give away what I have found for little or nothing, it is you who would profit by it. Besides, if this diamond

possesses great value, it is not because nature has been elaborating it since the beginning of time: she does as much for a drop of dew."

"Yes; but if diamonds were as common as dew-drops, you could no longer lay down the law to me, and make your own conditions."

"Very true; because, in that case, you would not address yourself to me, or would not be disposed to recompense me highly for a *service* which you could easily perform for yourself."

The result of this dialogue is, that Value no more resides in the diamond than in the air or in the water. It resides exclusively in the *services* which we suppose to be rendered and received with reference to these things, and is determined by the free bargaining of the parties who make the exchange.

Take up the *Collection des Économistes*, and read and compare all the definitions which you will find there. If there be one of them which meets the cases of the air and the diamond, two cases in appearance so opposite, throw this book into the fire. But if the definition which I propose, simple as it is, solves, or rather obviates, the difficulty, you are bound in conscience, gentle reader, to go on to the end of the work, or it is in vain that we have placed an inviting sign-board over the vestibule of the science.

Allow me to give some more examples, in order to elucidate clearly my thoughts, and familiarize the reader with a new definition. By exhibiting this fundamental principle in different aspects, we shall clear the way for a thorough comprehension of the consequences, which I venture to predict will be found no less important than unexpected.

Among the wants to which our physical constitution subjects us is that of food; and one of the articles best fitted to satisfy that want is Bread.

As the need of food is personal to me, I should, naturally, myself perform all the operations necessary to provide the needful supply of bread. I can the less expect my fellow-men to render me gratuitously this service, that they are themselves subject to the same want, and condemned to the same exertion.

Were I to make my own bread, I must devote myself to a labour infinitely more complicated, but strictly analogous to that which the necessity of fetching water from the spring would have imposed upon me. The elements of bread exist everywhere in nature. As J. B. Say has judiciously remarked, it is neither possible nor necessary for man to create anything. Gases, salts, electricity, vegetable life, all exist; my business is to unite them, assist them,

combine them, transport them, availing myself of that great laboratory called the earth, in which mysteries are accomplished from which human science has scarcely raised the veil. If the operations to which I must devote myself in the pursuit of my design are in the aggregate very complicated, each of them, taken singly, is as simple as the act of drawing water from the fountain. Every effort I make is simply a service which I render to myself; and if, in consequence of a bargain freely entered into, it happens that other persons save me some of these efforts, or the whole of them, these are so many *services* which I receive. The aggregate of these services, compared with those which I render in return, constitute the value of the Bread and determine its amount.

A convenient intermediate commodity intervenes to facilitate this exchange of services, and even to serve as a measure of their relative importance — Money. But this makes no substantial difference,—the principle remains exactly the same, just as in mechanics the transmission of forces is subject to the same law, whether there be one or several intermediate wheels.

This is so true that, when the loaf is worth fourpence, for example, if a good book-keeper wishes to analyze its *value*, he will succeed in discovering, amid the multiplicity of transactions, which go to the accomplishment of the final result, all those whose services have contributed to form that value,—all those who have saved labour to the man who finally pays for it as the consumer. He discovers, first of all, the baker, who retains his five per cent., and from that per-centage remunerates the mason who has built his oven, the wood-cutter who prepares his billets, &c. Then comes the miller, who receives not only the recompense of his own labour, but the means of remunerating the quarryman who has furnished his millstones, the labourer who has formed his dam, &c. Other portions of the total value go to the thresher, the reaper, the labourer, the sower, until you account for the last farthing. No part of it assuredly goes to remunerate God and nature. The very idea is absurd, and yet this is rigorously implied in the theory of the Economists, who attribute a certain portion of the value of a product to matter or natural forces. No; we still find that what *has value* is not the Loaf, but the series of *services* which have put me in possession of it.

It is true that, among the elementary parts of the value of the loaf, our book-keeper will find one which he will have difficulty in connecting with a *service*, at least a service implying effort. He

will find of the fourpence, of which the price is made up, a part goes to the proprietor of the soil, to the man who has the keeping of the laboratory. That small portion of the value of the loaf constitutes what is called the *rent of land;* and, misled by the form of expression, by the metonymy which again makes its appearance here, our calculator may be tempted to think that this portion is allotted to natural agents—to the soil itself.

I maintain that, if he exercises sufficient skill, he will find that this is still the price of real *services*—services of the same kind as all the others. This will be demonstrated with the clearest evidence when we come to treat of *landed property.* At present, I shall only remark, that I am not concerned here with property, but with *value.* I don't inquire whether all services are real and legitimate, or whether men do not sometimes succeed in getting paid for services which they do not render. The world, alas! is full of such injustices, but *rent* must not be included among them.

All that I have to demonstrate here is, that the pretended value of *commodities* is only the value of *services*, real or imaginary, received and rendered in connexion with them—that value does not reside in the commodities themselves, and is no more to be found in the loaf than in the diamond, the water, or the air—that no part of the remuneration goes to nature—that it proceeds from the final consumer of the article, and is distributed exclusively among men,—and that it would not be accorded to them by him for any other reason than that they have rendered him services, unless, indeed, in the case of violence or fraud.

Two men agree that ice is a good thing in summer, and coal a still better thing in winter. They supply two of our wants—the one cools, the other warms us. We do not fail to remark that the Utility of these commodities consists in certain *material* properties suitably adapted to our *material* organs. We remark, moreover, that among those properties, which physics and chemistry might enumerate, we do not find *value*, or anything like it. How, then, have we come to regard value as inherent in matter and material?

If the two men we have supposed wished to obtain the satisfaction of their wants, without acting in concert, each would labour to provide for himself both the articles wanted. If they came to an understanding, the one would provide coal for two from the coal-mine, the other ice for two from the mountain. This presupposes a bargain. They must then adjust the relation of the two services exchanged. They would take all circumstances into

account—the difficulties to be overcome, the dangers to be braved, the time to be spent, the pains to be taken, the skill to be displayed, the risks to be run, the possibility of providing for their wants in some other way, &c. &c. When they came to an understanding, the Economist would say, The two *services* exchanged *are worth* each other. In common language, it would be said by metonymy—Such a quantity of coal *is worth* such a quantity of ice, as if the value had passed physically into these bodies. But it is easy to see that if the common form of expression enables us to state the results, the scientific expression alone reveals to us the true causes.

In place of two services and two persons, the agreement may embrace a greater number, substituting a complex Exchange for simple Barter. In that case, money would intervene to facilitate the exchange. Need I say that the principle of value would be neither changed nor displaced?

But I must add here a single observation *àpropos* of coal. It may be that there is only one coal-mine in a country, and that an individual has got possession of it. If so, this man will make conditions; that is to say, he will put a high price upon his *services*, or pretended *services*.

We have not yet come to the question of right and justice, to the distinction between true and loyal services, and those that are fraudulent and pretended. What concerns us at this moment is, to consolidate the true theory of value, and to disembarrass it of one error with which Economical science is infected. When we say that what nature has done or given, she has done or given *gratuitously*, and that the notion of *value* is excluded, we are answered by an analysis of the price of coal, or some other natural product. It is acknowledged, indeed, that the greater part of this price is the remuneration of the services of man. One man has excavated the ground, another has drained away the water, another has raised the fuel to the surface, another has transported it to its destination; and it is the aggregate of these works, it is allowed, which constitutes *nearly* the entire *value*. Still there remains one portion of the *value* which does not correspond with any labour or *service*. This is the value of the coal as it lies under the soil, still virgin, and untouched by human labour. It forms the share of the proprietor; and, since this portion of Value is not of human creation, it follows necessarily that it is the creation of nature.

I reject that conclusion, and I premonish the reader that, if he

admits it to a greater or less extent, he cannot proceed a single step farther in the science. No; the action of nature does not create Value, any more than the action of man creates matter. Of two things one: either the proprietor has usefully co-operated towards the final result, and has rendered real services, and then the portion of value which he has conferred on the coal enters into my definition; or else he obtrudes himself as a parasite, and, in that case, he has had the address to get paid for *services* which he has not rendered, and the price of the coal is unduly augmented. That circumstance may prove, indeed, that injustice has entered into the transaction; but it cannot overturn the theory so as to authorize us to say that this portion of value is material,—that it is combined as a physical element with the gratuitous gifts of Providence. Here is the proof of it. Cause the injustice to cease, if injustice there be, and the corresponding value will disappear, which it assuredly would not have done had the value been inherent in matter and of natural creation.*

Let us now pass to one of our most imperious wants, that of *security*.

A certain number of men land upon an inhospitable coast. They begin to work. But each of them finds himself constantly drawn away from his employment by the necessity of defending himself against wild beasts, or men still more savage. Besides the time and the exertion which he devotes directly to the work of defence, he has to provide himself with arms and munitions. At length it is discovered that, on the whole, infinitely less power and effort would be wasted if some of them, abandoning other work, were to devote themselves exclusively to this *service*. This duty is assigned to those who are most distinguished for address, courage, and vigour—and they improve in an art which they make their exclusive business. Whilst they watch over the public safety, the community reaps from its labours, now no longer interrupted, more satisfactions *for all* than it loses by the diversion of ten men from other avocations. This arrangement is in consequence made. What do we see in it but a new progress in the *division of occupations*, inducing and requiring an exchange of *services*?

* I have ventured to state elsewhere some of the reasons which induce me to doubt the entire soundness of Bastiat's conclusions on the subject of Rent and the Value of Land.—See *Note* to *Chapter* ix. *post*.—TRANSLATOR.

Are the services of these soldiers, guards, militiamen, or whatever you may call them, *productive?* Undoubtedly they are, seeing that the sole object of the arrangement is to increase the proportion which the aggregate Satisfactions of the community bear to the general efforts.

Have they *Value?* They must have it, since we esteem them, appreciate them, *estimate* their worth, and, in fine, pay for them with other *services* with which they are compared.

The form in which this remuneration is stipulated for, the mode of levying it, the process we adopt in adjusting and concluding the arrangement, make no alteration on the principle. Are there efforts saved to some men by others? Are there satisfactions procured for some by others? In that case there are *services* exchanged, compared, *estimated;*—there is *Value.*

The kind of services we are now discussing, when social complications occur, lead sometimes to frightful consequences. The very nature of the services which we demand from this class of functionaries requires us to put into their hands Power,—power sufficient to subdue all resistance,—and it sometimes happens that they abuse it, and turn it against the very community which employs them. Deriving from the community services proportioned to the want we have of *security*, they themselves may cause insecurity, in order to display their own importance, and, by a too skilful diplomacy, involve their fellow-citizens in perpetual wars.

All this has happened, and still happens. Great disturbances of the just equilibrium of reciprocal services are the result of it. But it makes no change in the fundamental principle and scientific theory of Value.

I must still give another example or two; but I pray the reader to believe that I feel quite as much as he can how tiresome and fatiguing this series of hypotheses must be—throwing us back, as they all do, on the same kind of proof, tending to the same conclusion, expressed in the same terms. He must understand, however, that this process, if not the most interesting, is at least the surest way of establishing the true theory of Value, and of thus clearing the road we have to traverse.

We suppose ourselves in Paris. In that great metropolis there is a vast fermentation of desires, and abundant means also of satisfying them. Multitudes of rich men, or men in easy circumstances, devote themselves to industry, to the arts, to politics—

and in the evening they are all eager to obtain an hour's recreation. Among the amusements which they relish most is the pleasure of hearing the music of Rossini sung by Malibran, or the admirable poetry of Racine interpreted by Rachel. There are in the world only two women who can furnish these noble and delicate kinds of entertainment, and unless we could subject them to torture, which would probably not succeed, we have no other way of procuring their services but by addressing ourselves to their good will. Thus the services which we expect from Malibran and Rachel are possessed of great *Value*. This explanation is prosaic enough, but it is true.

If an opulent banker should desire to gratify his vanity by having the performances of one of these great *artistes* in his *salons*, he will soon find by experience the full truth of my theory. He desires a rich treat, a lively satisfaction—he desires it eagerly—and only one person in the world can furnish it. He cannot procure it otherwise than by offering a large remuneration.

Between what extreme limits will the transaction oscillate? The banker will go on till he reaches the point at which he prefers rather to lose the satisfaction than to pay what he deems an extravagant price for it; the singer to that point at which she prefers to accept the remuneration offered, rather than not be remunerated at all. This point of equilibrium determines the value of this particular service, as it does of all others. It may be that in many cases custom fixes this delicate point. There is too much taste in the *beau monde* to *higgle* about certain services. The remuneration may even be gracefully disguised, so as to veil the vulgarity of the economic law. That law, however, presides over this transaction, just as it does over the most ordinary bargain; and Value does not change its nature because experience or urbanity dispenses with discussing it formally on every occasion.

This explains how *artistes* above the usual standard of excellence succeed in realizing great fortunes. Another circumstance favours them. Their services are of such a nature that they can render them, at one and the same time, and by one and the same effort, to a multitude of individuals. However large the theatre, provided the voice of Rachel can fill it, each spectator enjoys the full pleasure of her inimitable declamation. This is the foundation of a new arrangement. Three or four thousand people, all experiencing the same desire, may come to an understanding, and raise the requisite sum; and the contribution of each to the

remuneration of the great *tragedienne* constitutes the equivalent of the unique service rendered by her to all at once. Such is *Value.*

As a great number of auditors may combine in order to witness an entertainment of this description, so a number of actors may combine in order to perform in an opera or play. Managers may intervene, to save them the trouble of a multiplicity of trifling accessory arrangements. Value is thus multiplied, ramified, distributed, and rendered complex—but it does not change its nature.

We shall finish with some exceptional cases. Such cases form the best test of a sound theory. When the rule is correct, exceptions do not invalidate, but confirm it.

An aged priest moves slowly along, pensive, with staff in hand, and breviary under his arm. His air is serene, his countenance expressive,—he looks inspired! Where is he going? Do you see that church in the distance? The youthful village parson, distrustful as yet of his own powers, has called to his assistance the old missionary. But first of all he has some arrangements to make. The preacher will find indeed food and shelter at the parsonage—but he must live from one year's end to another. Mons. le Curé, then, has promoted a subscription among the rich people of the village, moderate in amount, but sufficient; for the aged pastor is not exacting, and answered the person who wrote to him—"Du pain pour moi, voilà mon nécessaire; une obole pour le pauvre, voilà mon superflu."

Thus are the economic preliminaries complied with; for this meddling Political Economy creeps into everything, and is to be found everywhere—*Nil humani à me alienum puto.*

Let us enlarge a little on this example, which is very apposite to what we are now discussing.

Here you have an exchange of services. On the one hand you have an old man who devotes his time, his strength, his talents, his health, to enlighten the minds of a few villagers, and raise them to a higher moral level. On the other hand, bread for a few days, and a hat and cassock, are assured to the man of eloquence.

But there is something more here. There is a rivalry of sacrifices. The old priest refuses everything that is not absolutely indispensable. Of that poor pittance the curé takes one half on his own shoulders; the village Crœsuses exempt their brethren from the other half, who nevertheless profit by the sermons.

Do these sacrifices invalidate our definition of value? Not at

all. Each is free to render his services only on such terms as are agreeable to himself. If these conditions are made easy, or if none are stipulated for, what is the consequence? The *service*, preserving its utility, loses its value. The old priest is persuaded that his services will find their reward in another world, and he cares not for their being recompensed here below. He feels, no doubt, that he is rendering a service to his auditors in addressing them, but he also feels that they do him a service in listening to him. Hence it follows that the transaction is based upon advantage to one of the contracting parties, with the full consent of the other. That is all. In general, exchanges are determined and estimated by reference to self-interest; but, thank God, that is not always the case: they are sometimes based on the principle of sympathy, and in that case we either transfer to another a satisfaction which we might have reserved for ourselves, or we make an effort for him which we might have devoted to our own profit and advantage. Generosity, devotion, self-sacrifice, are impulses of our nature, which, like many other circumstances, influence the actual *value* of a particular service, but they make no change on the general law of *values*.

In contrast to this consoling example, I might adduce another of a very opposite character. In order that a service should possess value, in the economical sense of the word, it is not at all indispensable that it should be a real, conscientious, and useful service; it is sufficient that it is accepted, and paid for by another service. The world is full of people who palm upon the public services of a quality more than doubtful, and make the public pay for them. All depends on the *judgment* which we form in each case; and this is the reason why morals will be always the best auxiliary of Political Economy.

Impostors succeed in propagating a false belief. They represent themselves as the ambassadors of Heaven. They open at pleasure the gates of heaven or of hell. When this belief has once taken firm root, "Here," say they, "are some little images to which we have communicated the virtue of securing eternal happiness to those who carry them about their persons. In bestowing upon you one of these images, we render you an immense *service*. You must render us, then, certain *services* in return." Here you have a *Value* created. It is founded on a false appreciation, you say, and that is true. We might say as much of many material things which possess a certain value, for they would find pur-

chasers if set up to auction. Economic science would become impossible if we admitted as values only values correctly and judiciously appreciated. At every step we must begin a new course of the moral and physical sciences. In a state of isolation, depraved desires and a warped intelligence may cause a man to pursue with great effort and exertion a chimerical satisfaction—a delusion. In like manner, in the social state, it sometimes happens, as the philosopher says, that we buy regret too dear. But if truth is naturally more in keeping with the human mind than error, all these frauds are destined to disappear—all these delusive services to be spurned and lose their *value*. Civilisation will, in the long-run, put everybody and everything in the right place.

But we must conclude this analysis, which has already extended to too great a length. Among the various wants of our nature, respiration, hunger, thirst—and the wants and desires which take their rise in our vanity, in our heads, hearts, and opinions, in our hopes for the future, whether well or ill grounded —everywhere we have sought for Value—and we have found it wherever an *exchange of service* takes place. We have found it everywhere of the same nature, based upon a principle clear, simple, absolute, although influenced by a multitude of varying circumstances. We might have passed in review all our other wants; we might have cited the carpenter, the mason, the manufacturer, the tailor, the physician, the officer of justice, the lawyer, the merchant, the painter, the judge, the president of the republic, and we should have found exactly the same thing. Frequently a material substance; sometimes forces furnished *gratuitously* by nature; always human services interchanged, measuring each other, estimating, appreciating, *valuing* one another, and exhibiting simply the result of that Valuation—or VALUE.

There is, however, one of our wants, very special in its nature, the cement of society, at once the cause and the effect of all our transactions, and the everlasting problem of Political Economy, of which it is necessary to say something in this place—I allude to the want of *Exchanging*.

In the preceding chapter we have described the marvellous effects of Exchange. They are such that men must naturally feel a desire to facilitate it, even at the expense of considerable sacrifices. It is for this end that we have roads, canals, railways, carriages, ships, merchants, tradesmen, bankers; and it is impossible to believe that society would submit to such enormous

draughts upon its forces for the purpose of facilitating exchange, if it did not find in exchange itself an ample compensation.

We have also seen that direct *barter* could give rise only to transactions at once inconvenient and restrained.

It is on that account that men have thought of resolving barter into two factors, *sale* and *purchase*, by means of an intermediate commodity, readily divisible, and, above all, possessed of *value*, in order to secure public confidence. This intermediate commodity is Money.

And it is worthy of remark that what, by an ellipsis or metonymy, we designate the value of gold and silver rests on exactly the same foundation as that of the air, the water, the diamond, the sermons of our old missionary, or the roulades of Malibran—that is to say, upon services rendered and received.

The gold, indeed, which we find spread on the favoured banks of the Sacramento, derives from nature many precious qualities—ductility, weight, beauty, brilliancy, utility even, if you will. But there is one quality which nature has not given it, because nature has nothing to do with that—*Value*. A man knows that gold supplies a want which is sensibly felt, and that it is much coveted. He goes to California to seek for gold, just as my neighbour went to the spring to fetch water. He devotes himself to hard work—he digs, he excavates, he washes, he melts down—and then he comes to me and says: I will render you the service of transferring to you this gold; what service will you render me in return? We discuss the matter, we weigh all the circumstances which should influence our determination;—at last we conclude a bargain, and Value is manifested and fixed. Misled by this curt form of expression, "Gold is *valuable*," we might suppose that the value resides in the gold, just as the qualities of ductility and specific gravity reside in it, and that nature has put it there. I hope the reader is already satisfied that this is a mistake. By and by he will be convinced that it is a deplorable fallacy.

Another misconception exists on the subject of gold, or rather of money. As it is the constant medium which enters into all transactions, the mean term between the two factors of *compound barter*, it is always with its value that we compare the value of the two services to be exchanged; and hence we are led to regard gold or money as a *measure* of value. In practice it cannot be otherwise. But science ought never to forget that money, so far as its value is concerned, is subject to the same fluctuations as

any other product or service. Science does forget this sometimes; nor is it surprising. Everything tends to make us consider money as the measure of value, in the same way as the *litre* (or quart) is the measure of capacity. It plays an analogous part in actual business. One is not aware of its own fluctuations, because the franc, like its multiples and sub-multiples, always retains the same denomination. And arithmetic itself tends to propagate the confusion by ranking the franc as a measure, along with the measures of quantity in daily use.

I have given a definition of Value, at least of value according to my idea of it. I have subjected that definition to the test of divers facts. None of them, so far as I can see, contradict it; and the scientific signification which I have given to the word agrees with its vulgar acceptation, which is no small advantage, no slight guarantee—for what is science but experience classified? What is theory but the methodical exposition of universal practice?

I may now be permitted to glance rapidly at the systems which have hitherto prevailed. It is not in a spirit of controversy, much less of criticism, that I enter upon this examination, and I should willingly avoid it were I not convinced that it will throw new light upon the fundamental principles which I am advocating.

We have seen that writers on Political Economy have sought for the principle of Value in one or more of the accidents which exercise a notable influence over it, such as materiality, conservability, utility, rarity, labour, &c.; just like a physiologist who should seek the principle of life in one or more of the external phenomena which are necessary to its development, as air, water, light, electricity, &c.

Materiality.—"Man," says M. de Bonald, "is mind served by organs." If the economists of the materialist school had simply meant that men can render reciprocal services to each other only through the medium of their bodily organs, and had thence concluded that there is always something material in these services, and, consequently, in Value, I should not have proceeded a step farther, as I have a horror at word-catching and subtilties, which wit revels in.

But they have not thus understood it. What they believe is that Value has been communicated to matter, either by the labour of man or by the action of nature. In a word, deceived by the elliptical form of expression, gold *is worth* so much, corn *is worth* so much, they think they see in matter a quality called *Value*,

just as the natural philosopher sees in it resistance and weight—and yet these attributes have been disputed.

Be that as it may, I dispute formally the existence of Value as an attribute of matter.

And first of all, it cannot be denied that Matter and Value are often found separated. When we say to a man—Carry that letter to its destination—fetch me some water—teach me this science or that manufacturing process—give me advice as to my sickness, or my law-suit—watch over my security, while I give myself up to labour or to sleep,—what we demand is a Service, and in that service we acknowledge in the face of the world that there resides a *Value*, seeing that we pay for it voluntarily by an *equivalent* service. It would be strange that we should refuse to admit in theory what universal consent admits in practice.

True, our transactions have reference frequently to material objects; but what does that prove? Why, that men, by exercising foresight, prepare to render services which they know to be in demand. I purchase a coat ready made, or I have a tailor to come to my house to work by the day; but does that change the principle of Value, so as to make it reside at one time in the coat and at another time in the service?

One might ask here this puzzling question—Must we not see the principle of Value first of all in the material object, and then attribute it by analogy to the services? I say that it is just the reverse. We must recognise it first of all in the services, and attribute it afterwards, if we choose, by a figure of speech, by metonymy, to the material objects.

The numerous examples which I have adduced render it unnecessary for me to pursue this discussion further. But I cannot refrain from justifying myself for having entered on it, by showing to what fatal consequences an error, or, if you will, an incomplete truth, may lead, when placed at the threshold of a science.

The least inconvenience of the definition which I am combating has been to curtail and mutilate Political Economy. If Value resides in matter, then where there is no matter there can be no Value. The *Physiocrates** designated three-fourths of the entire population as *sterile*, and Adam Smith, softening the expression, as *unproductive* classes.

But as facts in the long-run are stronger than definitions, it became necessary in some way to bring back these classes, and

* French Economists of the school of Quesnay.—TRANSLATOR.

make them re-enter the circle of economic studies. They were introduced by way of analogy; but the language of the science, formed beforehand on other definitions, had been so materialized as to render this extension repulsive. What mean such phrases as these: "To consume an immaterial product? Man is accumulated capital? Security is a commodity?" &c. &c.

Not only was the language of the science materialized beyond measure, but writers were forced to surcharge it with subtile distinctions, in order to reconcile ideas which had been erroneously separated. Hence Adam Smith's expression of *Value in use*, in contradistinction to *Value in exchange*, &c.

A greater evil still has been that, in consequence of this confusion of two great social phenomena, *property* and *community*, the one has seemed incapable of justification, and the other has been lost sight of.

In fact, if Value resides in matter, it becomes mixed up with the physical qualities of bodies which render them useful to man. Now, these qualities are frequently placed there by nature. Then nature co-operates in creating *Value*, and we find ourselves attributing value to what is essentially *common* and *gratuitous*. On what basis, then, do you place *property?* When the remuneration which I give in order to obtain a material product, corn for example, is distributed among all the labourers, near or at a distance, who have rendered me a *service* in the production of that commodity,—who is to receive that portion of the *value* which corresponds to the action of nature, and with which man has nothing to do? Is it Providence who is to receive it? No one will say so, for we never heard of Nature demanding wages. Is man to receive it? What title has he to it, seeing that, by the hypothesis, he has done nothing?

Do not suppose that I am exaggerating, and that, for the sake of my own definition, I am torturing the definition of the economists, and deducing from it too rigorous conclusions. No, these consequences they have themselves very explicitly deduced, under the pressure of logic.

Thus, Senior has said that "those who have appropriated natural agents receive, under the form of rent, a recompense without having made any sacrifice. They merely hold out their hands to receive the offerings of the rest of the community." Scrope tells us that "landed property is an artificial restriction imposed upon the enjoyment of those gifts which the Creator has

intended for the satisfaction of the wants of all." J. B. Say has these words: "Arable lands *would seem* to form a portion of natural wealth, seeing that they are not of human creation, and that nature has given them to man *gratuitously*. But as this description of wealth is not fugitive, like air and water,—as a field is a space fixed and marked out which *certain* men have succeeded in appropriating, to the exclusion of all others who have given their consent to this appropriation, land, which was natural and *gratuitous* property, has now *become* social wealth, the use of which must be paid for."

Truly, if it be so, Proudhon is justified in proposing this terrible question, followed by an affirmation still more terrible:—

"To whom belongs the rent of land? To the producer of land without doubt. Who made the land? God. Then, proprietor, begone!"

Yes, by a vicious definition, Political Economy has handed over logic to the Communists. I will break this terrible weapon in their hands, or rather they shall surrender it to me cheerfully. The consequences will disappear when I have annihilated the principle. And I undertake to demonstrate that if, in the production of wealth, the action of nature is combined with the action of man, the first—gratuitous and common in its own nature—remains gratuitous and common in all our transactions; that the second alone represents *services, value;* that the action of man alone is remunerated; and that it alone is the foundation, explanation, and justification of Property. In a word, I maintain that, relatively to each other, men are proprietors only of the value of things, and that in transferring products from hand to hand, what they stipulate for exclusively is value, that is to say, reciprocal services;—all the qualities, properties, and utilities, which these products derive from nature being obtained by them into the bargain.

If Political Economy hitherto, in disregarding this fundamental consideration, has shaken the guardian principle of property, by representing it as an artificial institution, necessary, indeed, but unjust, she has by the same act left in the shade, and completely unperceived, another admirable phenomenon, the most touching dispensation of Providence to the creature—the phenomenon of *progressive community*.

Wealth, taking the word in its general acceptation, results from the combination of two agencies—the action of nature, and the

action of man. The first is *gratuitous* and *common* by the destination of Providence, and never loses that character. The second alone is *provided with value*, and, consequently, *appropriated*. But with the development of intelligence, and the progress of civilisation, the one takes a greater and greater part, the other a less and less part, in the realization of each given utility; whence it follows that the domain of the Gratuitous and the Common is continually expanding among men relatively to the domain of Value and Property; a consoling and suggestive view of the subject, entirely hidden from the eye of science, so long as we continue to attribute Value to the co-operation of nature.

Men of all religions thank God for his benefits. The father of a family blesses the bread which he breaks and distributes to his children — a touching custom, that reason would not justify were the liberality of Providence other than gratuitous.

Durableness, conservability—that pretended *sine quâ non* of Value, is connected with the subject which I have just been discussing. It is necessary to the very existence of value, as Adam Smith thinks, that it should be fixed and realized in something which can be exchanged, accumulated, preserved, consequently in something *material*.

"There is one sort of labour which adds * to the value of the subject upon which it is bestowed. There is another which has no such effect."

"The labour of the manufacturer," he adds, "fixes and realizes itself in some particular subject or vendible commodity, *which lasts for some time at least* after the labour is past. The labour of the menial servant, on the contrary" (to which the author assimilates in this respect that of soldiers, magistrates, musicians, professors, &c.), "does not fix or realize itself in any particular subject or vendible commodity. His services perish in the very instant of their performance, and leave no trace of *value* behind them."

Here we find *Value* connected rather with the modifications of matter than with the satisfactions of men—a profound error; for the sole good to be obtained from the modification of material things is the attainment of that satisfaction which is the design,

* Adds! The subject had then intrinsic value, anterior to the bestowal of labour upon it. That could only come from nature. The action of nature is not then *gratuitous*, according to this showing; but in that case, who can have the audacity to exact payment for this portion of *superhuman* value?

the end, the *consommation** of every Effort. If, then, we realize that satisfaction by a direct and immediate effort, the result is the same; and if that effort can be made the subject of transactions, exchanges, *estimation*, it includes the principle of *Value.*

As regards the interval which may elapse between the effort and the satisfaction, surely Adam Smith attributes far too much importance to it, when he says that the existence or non-existence of Value depends upon it. "The value of a vendible commodity," he says, "*lasts for some time at least.*" Undoubtedly it lasts until the commodity has answered its purpose, which is to satisfy a want; and exactly the same thing may be said of a service. As long as that plate of strawberries remains on the sideboard it preserves its *value.* Why? Because it is the result of a service which I have designed to render to myself, or that another has rendered to me by way of compensation, and *of which I have not yet made use.* The moment I have made use of it, by eating the strawberries, the value will disappear. *The service will vanish and leave no trace of value behind.* The very same thing holds of personal services. The consumer makes the value disappear, for it has been created only for that purpose. It is of little consequence, as regards the principle of value, whether the service is undertaken to satisfy a want to-day, to-morrow, or a year hence.

Take another case. I am afflicted with a cataract. I call in an oculist. The instrument he makes use of has *value*, because it has durability; the operation he performs, it is said, has none, and yet I pay for it, and I have made choice of one among many rival operators, and arranged his remuneration beforehand. To maintain that this service has no value is to run counter to notorious facts and notions universally received. And of what use, I would ask, is a theory which, far from taking universal practice into account, ignores it altogether?

I would not have the reader suppose that I am carried away by an inordinate love of controversy. If I dwell upon these elementary notions, it is to prepare his mind for consequences of the highest importance, which will be afterwards developed. I know not whether it be to violate the laws of method to indicate these consequences by anticipation, but I venture to depart slightly from the regular course, in order to obviate the danger of becoming tedious. This is the reason why I have spoken prematurely

* The French Economists translate our word *consumption* by consommation.—TRANSLATOR.

of Property and Community; and for the same reason I shall here say a word respecting *Capital.*

As Adam Smith made value to reside in matter, he could not conceive Capital as existing otherwise than in an accumulation of material objects. How, then, can we attribute Value to Services not susceptible of being accumulated or converted into capital?

Among the different descriptions of Capital, we give the first place to tools, machines, instruments of labour. They serve to make natural forces co-operate in the work of production, and, attributing to these forces the faculty of creating value, people were led to imagine that instruments of labour, as such, were endowed with the same faculty, independently of any human services. Thus the spade, the plough, the steam-engine, were supposed to co-operate simultaneously with natural agents and human forces in creating not only Utility, but Value also. But all value is remunerated by exchange. Who, then, is to receive that portion of value which is independent of all human service?

It is thus that the school of Proudhon, after having brought the *rent of land* into question, has contested also the *interest of capital* —a larger thesis, because it includes the other. I maintain that the Proudhonian error, viewed scientifically, has its root in the prior error of Adam Smith. I shall demonstrate that capital, like natural agents, considered in itself, and with reference to its own proper action, creates utility, but never creates value. The latter is essentially the fruit of a legitimate *service.* I shall demonstrate also that, in the social order, capital is not an accumulation of material objects, depending on material durability, but an accumulation of *Values,* that is to say, of *services.* This will put an end (virtually at least, by removing its foundation) to the recent attack upon the productiveness of capital, and in a way satisfactory to the objectors themselves; for if I prove that there is nothing in the business of exchange but a *mutuality of services,* M. Proudhon must own himself vanquished by my victory over his principle.

Labour.—Adam Smith and his disciples have assigned the principle of Value to Labour under the condition of Materiality. This is contrary to the other opinion that natural forces play a certain part in the production of Value. I have not here to combat the contradictions which become apparent in all their fatal consequences when these authors come to discuss the rent of land and the interest of capital.

Be that as it may, when they refer the principle of Value to Labour, they would be very near the truth if they did not allude to manual labour. I have said, in fact, at the beginning of this chapter, that Value must have reference to *Effort*,—an expression which I prefer to the word Labour, as more general, and embracing the whole sphere of human activity. But I hasten to add that it can spring only from efforts exchanged—from reciprocal Services; because value is not a thing having independent existence, but a relation.

There are then, strictly speaking, two flaws in Adam Smith's definition. The first is, that it does not take exchange into account, without which value can be neither produced nor conceived. The second is, that it makes use of too restricted a term—*labour;* unless we give to that term an unusual extension, and include in it the ideas not only of intensity and duration, but of skill, sagacity, and even of good or bad fortune.

The word *service*, which I substitute in my definition, removes these defects. It implies, necessarily, the idea of transmission, for no service can be rendered which is not received; and it implies also the idea of Effort, without taking for granted that the value is proportionate.

It is in this, above all, that the definition of the English Economists is vicious. To say that Value resides in Labour induces us to suppose that Value and Labour are proportional, and serve as reciprocal measures of each other. This is contrary to fact, and a definition which is contrary to fact must be defective.

It often happens that an exertion, considered insignificant in itself, passes with the world as of enormous *value.* (Take, for example, the diamond, the performance of the prima donna, a dash of a banker's pen, a fortunate privateering adventure, a touch of Raphael's pencil, a bull of plenary indulgence, the easy duty of an English queen, &c.) It still more frequently happens that laborious and overwhelming labour tends to what is absolutely *valueless;* and if it be so, how can we establish co-relation and proportion between *Value* and *Labour?*

My definition removes the difficulty. It is clear that in certain circumstances one can render a great service at the expense of a very small exertion, and that in others, after great exertion, we render no service at all. And this is another reason why, in this respect, it is correct to say that the Value is in the Service

rendered, rather than in the Labour bestowed, seeing that it bears proportion to the one and not to the other.

I go further. I affirm that value is estimated as much by the labour saved to the recipient as by the labour performed by the *cédant* [the man who cedes or makes it over]. Let the reader recall the dialogue which we supposed to take place between the two parties who bargained for the diamond. In substance, it has reference to no accidental circumstances, but enters, tacitly, into the essence and foundation of all transactions. Keep in mind that we here take for granted that the two parties are at entire liberty to exercise their own will and judgment. Each of them, in making the exchange, is determined by various considerations, among which we must certainly rank, as of the greatest importance, the difficulty experienced by the recipient in procuring for himself, by a direct exertion, the satisfaction which is offered to him. Both parties have their eyes on that difficulty, the one with the view of being more yielding, the other with the view of being more exacting. The labour undergone by the *cédant* also exerts an influence on the bargain. It is one of the elements of it, but it is not the only one. It is not, then, exact to say that value is determined by labour. It is determined by a multitude of considerations, all comprised in the word *service*.

What may be affirmed with great truth is this; that, in consequence of competition, Value *tends* to become more proportioned to Effort—recompense to merit. It is one of the beautiful Harmonies of the social state. But, as regards Value, this equalizing pressure exercised by competition is quite external, and it is not allowable in strict logic to confound the influence which a phenomenon undergoes, from an external cause, with the phenomenon itself.

Utility.—J. B. Say, if I am not mistaken, was the first who threw off the yoke of *materiality*. He made out value very expressly to be a *moral quality*,—an expression which perhaps goes too far, for value can scarcely be said to be either a physical or a moral quality—it is simply a relation.

But the great French Economist has himself said, that "It is not given to any one to reach the confines of science, and Philosophers mount on each other's shoulders to explore a more and more extended horizon." Perhaps the glory of M. Say (in what regards the special question with which we are now occupied, for his titles to glory in other respects are as numerous as they are imperishable) is to have bequeathed to his successors a view of the subject which is prolific and suggestive.

M. Say's principle was this—"*Value* is *founded on Utility.*"

If we had here to do with utility as connected with human *services*, I should not contest this principle. At most, I could only observe that it is superfluous, as being self-evident. It is very clear, as matter of fact, that no one consents to remunerate a *service*, unless, right or wrong, he judges it to be useful. The word *service* includes the idea of *utility*—so much so that it is nothing else than a literal reproduction of the Latin word *uti;* in French, *servir.*

But, unfortunately, it is not in this sense that Say understands it. He discovers the principle of value not only in human services, rendered by means of material things, but in the *useful* qualities put by nature into the things themselves. In this way he places himself once more under the yoke of materiality, and is very far, we are obliged to confess, from clearing away the mist in which the English Economists had enveloped the question of Property.

Before discussing Say's principle on its own merits, I must explain its logical bearing, in order to avoid the reproach of landing myself and the reader in an idle discussion.

We cannot doubt that the Utility of which Say speaks is that which resides in material objects. If corn, timber, coal, broad cloth, have value, it is because these products possess qualities which render them proper for our use, fit to satisfy the want we experience of food, fuel, and clothing.

Hence, as nature has created Utility, it is inferred that she has created also Value—a fatal confusion of ideas, out of which the enemies of property have forged a terrible weapon.

Take a commodity, corn for example. I purchase it at the *Halle au Blé* for sixteen francs. A great portion of these sixteen francs is distributed—in infinite ramifications, and an inextricable complication of advances and reimbursements—among all the men, here or abroad, who have co-operated in furnishing this corn. Part goes to the labourer, the sower, the reaper, the thrasher, the carter,—part to the blacksmith and plough-wright, who have prepared the agricultural implements. Thus far all are agreed, whether Economists or Communists.

But I perceive that four out of the sixteen francs go to the proprietor of the soil, and I have a good right to ask if that man, like the others, has rendered me a Service to entitle him incontestably, like them, to remuneration.

According to the doctrine which the present work aspires to establish, the answer is categorical. It consists of a peremptory *yes*. The proprietor *has* rendered me a service. What is it? This, that he has by himself, or his ancestor, cleared and enclosed the field—he has cleared it of weeds and stagnant water—he has enriched and thickened the vegetable mould—he has built a house and a homestead. All this presupposes much labour executed by him in person; or, what comes to the same thing, by others whom he has paid. These are services, certainly, which, according to the just law of reciprocity, must be reimbursed to him. Now, this proprietor has never been remunerated, at least to the full extent. He cannot be so by the first man who comes to buy from him a bag of corn. What is the arrangement, then, that takes place? Assuredly the most ingenious, the most legitimate, the most equitable arrangement which it is possible to imagine. It consists in this—That whoever wishes to purchase a sack of corn shall pay, besides the services of the various labourers whom we have enumerated, a small portion of the *services* rendered by the proprietor. In other words, the *Value* of the proprietor's *services* is spread over all the sacks of corn which are produced by this field.

Now, it may be asked if the supposed remuneration of four francs be too great or too small. I answer that Political Economy has nothing to do with that. That science establishes that the value of the services rendered by the landed proprietor are regulated by exactly the same laws as the value of other services, and that is enough.

It may be a subject of surprise, too, that this bit-by-bit reimbursement should not at length amount to a complete liquidation, and, consequently, to an extinction of the proprietor's claim. They who make this objection do not reflect that it is of the nature of Capital to produce a perpetual return, as we shall see in the sequel.

I shall not dwell longer on that question in this place; and shall simply remark, that there is not in the entire price of the corn a single farthing which does not go to remunerate human services,—not one which corresponds to the *value* that nature is supposed to have given to the corn by imparting to it *utility*.

But if, adhering to the principle of Say and the English Economists, you assert that, of the sixteen francs, there are twelve which go to the labourers, sowers, reapers, carters, &c.—two which re-

compense the personal services of the proprietor; and, finally, that there are two others which represent a value which has for its foundation the *utility* created by God, by natural agents, and without any co-operation of man, do you not perceive that you immediately lay yourself open to be asked, Who is to profit by this portion of *value?* Who has a title to this remuneration? Nature does not demand it, and who dare take nature's place?

The more Say tries to explain Property on this hypothesis, the more he exposes himself to attack. He sets out by justly comparing nature to a laboratory, in which various chemical operations take place, the result of which is useful to man. "The soil, then," he adds, "is the *producer of utility*, and when IT (the soil) receives payment in the form of a profit or a rent *to its proprietor*, it is not without giving something to the consumer in exchange for what he pays IT (the soil). IT (still the soil) gives him the utility it has produced, and it is in producing this utility that *the earth* is *productive as well as labour.*"

This assertion is unmistakable. Here we have two pretenders, who present themselves to share the remuneration due by the consumer of corn—namely, the earth and labour. They urge the same title, for the soil, M. Say affirms, is productive as well as labour. Labour asks to be remunerated for a *service;* the soil demands to be remunerated for a *utility*, and this remuneration it demands not for itself (for in what form should we give it?) but for *its proprietor.*

Whereupon Proudhon summons the proprietor, who represents himself as having the powers of the soil at his disposal, to exhibit his title.

You wish me to pay; in other words, to render a service, in order that I may receive the *utility* produced by natural agents, independently of the assistance of man, already paid for separately.

But, I ask again, Who is to profit by my service?

Is it the producer of utility,—that is to say, the soil? That is absurd—the fear of any demand from that quarter need give no great uneasiness.

Is it man? but by what title does he demand it? If for having rendered me a service, well and good. In that case, we are at one. It is the human service which *has value*, not the natural service; and that is just the conclusion to which I desire to bring you.

That, however, is contrary to your hypothesis. You say that

all the human services are remunerated with fourteen francs, and that the two francs which make up the price of the corn correspond to the value created by nature. In that case, I repeat my question — By what title does any one present himself to receive them? Is it not, unfortunately, too clear that if you give specially the name of *proprietor* to the man who claims right to these two francs, you justify the too famous saying that *Property is theft?*

And don't imagine that this confusion between utility and value shakes only the foundation of landed property. After having led you to contest the *rent of land*, it leads you to contest also the *interest of capital.*

In fact, machines, the instruments of labour, are, like the soil, producers of *utility.* If that utility has *value*, it is paid for, for the word value implies right to payment. But to whom is the payment made? To the proprietor of the machine without doubt. Is it for a personal service? Then say at once that the value is in the service. But if you say that it is necessary to make a payment first for the service, and a second payment for the utility produced by the machine independently of the human action, which has been already recompensed, then I ask you to whom does this second payment go, and how has the man who has been already remunerated for all his services a right to demand anything more?

The truth is, that the utility which is produced by nature is *gratuitous*, and therefore *common*, like that produced by the instruments of labour. It is gratuitous and common on one condition, that we take the trouble, that we render ourselves the service of appropriating it; or if we give that trouble to or demand that service from another, that we cede to him in return an *equivalent* service. It is in these services, thus compared, that value resides, and not at all in natural utility. The exertion may be more or less great—that makes a difference in the value, not in the utility. When we stand near a spring, water is gratuitous for us all on condition that we stoop to lift it. If we ask our neighbour to take that trouble for us, then a convention, a bargain, a *value* makes its appearance, but that does not make the water otherwise than gratuitous. If we are an hour's walk from the spring, the basis of the transaction will be different; but the difference is one of degree, not of principle. The value has not, on that account, passed into the water or into its utility. The water continues still *gratuitous*

on condition of fetching it, or of remunerating those who, by a bargain freely made and discussed, agree to spare us that exertion by making it themselves.

It is the same thing in every case. We are surrounded by utilities, but we must *stoop to appropriate them.* That exertion is sometimes very simple, and often very complicated. Nothing is more easy, in the general case, than to draw water, the utility of which has been prepared by nature beforehand. It is not so easy to obtain corn, the utility of which nature has equally prepared. This is why these two efforts differ in degree, though not in principle. The service is more or less onerous; therefore more or less *valuable*—the utility is, and remains always, *gratuitous.*

Suppose an instrument of labour to intervene, what would be the result? That the utility would be more easily obtained. The service has thus less *value.* We certainly pay less for our books since the invention of printing. Admirable phenomenon, too little understood! You say that the instruments of labour produce Value—you are mistaken—it is Utility, and gratuitous Utility, you should say. As to Value, instead of producing it, they tend more and more to annihilate it.

It is quite true that the person who made the machine has rendered a service. He receives a remuneration by which the value of the product is augmented. This is the reason why we fancy we recompense the utility which the machine produces. It is an illusion. What we remunerate is the *services* which all those who have co-operated in making and working the machine have rendered to us. So little does the value reside in the utility produced, that even after having recompensed these new *services*, we acquire the utility on easier and cheaper terms than before.

Let us accustom ourselves to distinguish Utility from Value. Without this there can be no Economic science. I give utterance to no paradox when I affirm that Utility and Value, so far from being identical, or even similar, are ideas opposed to one another. Want, Effort, Satisfaction: here we have man regarded in an Economic point of view. The relation of Utility is with Want and Satisfaction. The relation of Value is with Effort. Utility is the Good, which puts an end to the want by the satisfaction. Value is the Evil, for it springs from the obstacle which is interposed between the want and the satisfaction. But for these obstacles, there would have been no Effort either to make or to exchange; Utility would be infinite, gratuitous, and common, *without*

condition, and the notion of Value would never have entered into the world. In consequence of these obstacles, Utility is gratuitous only on condition of Efforts exchanged, which, when compared with each other, give rise to Value. The more these obstacles give way before the liberality of nature and the progress of science, the more does utility approximate to the state of being absolutely common and gratuitous, for the onerous condition, and, consequently, the *value*, diminish as the obstacles diminish. I shall esteem myself fortunate, if, by these dissertations, which may appear subtle, and of which I am condemned to fear at once the length and the conciseness, I succeed in establishing this encouraging truth—*the legitimate property of value*,—and this other truth, equally consoling—*the progressive community of utility*.

One observation more. All that *serves* us is *useful* (*uti*, *servir*), and in this respect it is extremely doubtful whether there be anything in the universe (whether in the shape of forces or materials) which is not *useful* to man.

We may affirm at least, without fear of mistake, that a multitude of things possess a utility which is unknown to us. Were the moon placed either higher or lower than she is, it is very possible that the inorganic kingdom, consequently the vegetable kingdom, consequently also the animal kingdom, might be profoundly modified. But for that star which shines in the firmament while I write, it may be that the human race had not existed. Nature has surrounded us with utilities. The quality of being *useful* we recognise in many substances and phenomena;—in others, science and experience reveal it to us every day,—in others, again, it may exist in perfection, and yet we may remain for ever ignorant of it.

When these substances and phenomena exert upon us, but *independently of us*, their useful action, we have no interest in comparing the degree of their utility to mankind; and, what is more, we have scarcely the means of making the comparison. We know that oxygen and azote are useful to us, but we don't try, and probably we should try in vain, to determine in what proportion. We have not here the elements of appreciation—the elements of value. I should say as much of the salts, the gases, the forces which abound in nature. When all these agents are moved and combined so as to produce for us, but *without our co-operation*, utility, that utility we enjoy without *estimating* its value. It is when our co-operation comes into play, and, above all, when it

comes to be exchanged,—it is then, and then only, that Estimation and Value make their appearance, in connexion not with the utility of the substances or phenomena, of which we are often ignorant, but with the co-operation itself.

This is my reason for saying that "Value is the appreciation of services exchanged." These services may be very complicated; they may have exacted a multitude of operations recent or remote; they may be transmitted from one generation or one hemisphere to another generation or another hemisphere, embracing countless contracting parties, necessitating credits, advances, various arrangements, until a general balance is effected. But the principle of *value* is always in the services, and not in the utility of which these services are the vehicle,—utility which is gratuitous in its nature and essence, and which passes from hand to hand, if I may be allowed the expression, *into the bargain.*

After all, if you persist in seeing in Utility the foundation of Value, I am very willing, but it must be distinctly understood that it is not that utility which is in things and phenomena by the dispensation of Providence or the power of art, but the utility of human services compared and exchanged.

Rarity.—According to Senior, of all the circumstances which determine value, rarity is the most decisive. I have no objection to make to that remark, if it is not that the form in which it is made presupposes that value is inherent in things themselves—a hypothesis the very appearance of which I shall always combat. At bottom, the word *rarity*, as applied to the subject we are now discussing, expresses in a concise manner this idea, that, *cæteris paribus*, a service has more value in proportion as we have more difficulty in rendering it to ourselves; and that, consequently, a larger equivalent is exacted from us when we demand it from another. Rarity is one of these difficulties. It is one *obstacle* more to be surmounted. The greater it is, the greater remuneration do we award to those who surmount it for us. Rarity gives rise frequently to large remunerations, and this is my reason for refusing to admit with the English Economists that Value is proportional to Labour. We must take into account the parsimony with which nature treats us in certain respects. The word *service* embraces all these ideas and shades of ideas.

Judgment.—Storch sees *value* in the judgment by which we recognise it. Undoubtedly, whenever we have to do with *relation*, it is necessary to compare and to *judge*. Nevertheless, the relation

is one thing and the judgment is another. When we compare the height of two trees, their magnitude, and the difference of their magnitude, are independent of our appreciation.

But in the determination of value, what is the relation of which we have to form a judgment? It is the relation of two services exchanged. The business is to discover what the services rendered *are worth* in relation to those received, in connexion with acts or things exchanged, and taking all circumstances into account,—not what intrinsic utility resides in these acts or things, for this utility may, to some extent, be altogether independent of human exertion, and, consequently, devoid of *value.*

Storch falls into the error which I am now combating when he says,—

"Our judgment enables us to discover the relation which exists between our wants and the utility of things. The determination which our judgment forms upon the *utility of things* constitutes their *value.*"

And, farther on, he says,—

"In order to create a value, we must have the conjunction of these three circumstances:—1*st*, That man experiences or conceives a want; 2*d*, That there exists something calculated to satisfy that want; and, 3*d*, That a judgment is pronounced in favour of the *utility of the thing.* Then the value of things is their relative *utility.*"

During the day I experience the want of seeing clearly. There exists one thing calculated to satisfy that want—namely, the light of the sun. My judgment pronounces in favour of the utility of that thing, and . . . it has no value. Why? Because I enjoy it without calling for the services of any one.

At night I experience the same want. There exists one thing capable of satisfying it very imperfectly, a wax candle. My judgment pronounces in favour of the utility, but far inferior utility, of that thing—and it *has value.* Why? Because the man who has taken the trouble to make the candle will not give it to me except upon condition of my rendering him an equivalent service.

What we have, then, to compare and to judge of, in order to determine Value, is not the *relative utility* of things, but the relation of two services.

On these terms, I do not reject Storch's definition.

Permit me to recapitulate a little, in order to show clearly that my definition contains all that is true in the definitions of my

predecessors, and eliminates everything in them which is erroneous either through excess or defect.

The principle of Value, we have seen, resides in a human *service*, and results from the appreciation of two services compared.

Value must have relation to Effort. *Service* implies a certain Effort.

Value supposes a comparison of Efforts exchanged, at least exchangeable. *Service* implies the terms to give and to receive.

Value is not, however, in fact proportional to the intensity of the Efforts. *Service* does not necessarily imply that proportion.

A multitude of external circumstances influence value without constituting value itself. The word *service* takes all these circumstances in due measure into account.

Materiality.—When the service consists in transferring a material thing, nothing hinders us from saying, by metonymy, that it is the thing which *has value*. But we must not forget that this is a figure of speech, by which we attribute to things themselves the value of the services which produced them.

Conservability. — Without reference to the consideration of materiality, value endures until the satisfaction is obtained, and no longer. Whether the satisfaction follows the effort more or less nearly—whether the service is personal or real, makes no change in the nature of value.

Capability of Accumulation.—In a social point of view, what is accumulated by saving is not matter, but value or services.

Utility.—I admit, with M. Say, that Utility is the foundation of Value, provided it is granted me that we have no concern with the utility which resides in commodities, but with the relative utility of services.

Labour.—I admit, with Ricardo, that Labour is the foundation of Value, provided, first of all, the word labour is taken in the most general sense, and that you do not afterwards assert a proportionality which is contrary to fact; in other words, provided you substitute for the word *labour* the word *service*.

Rarity.—I admit, with Senior, that rarity influences *value*. But why? Because it renders the *service* so much more precious.

Judgment.—I admit, with Storch, that value results from a judgment formed, provided it be granted me that the judgment so formed is not upon the utility of things, but on the utility of *services*.

Thus I hope to satisfy Economists of all shades of opinion. I

admit them all to be right, because all have had a glimpse of the truth in one of its aspects. Error is no doubt on the reverse of the medal; and it is for the reader to decide whether my definition includes all that is true, and rejects all that is false.

I cannot conclude without saying a word on that *quadrature* of Political Economy—*the measure of value;* and here I shall repeat, and with still more force, the observation with which I terminated the preceding chapters.

I said that our wants, our desires, our tastes, have neither limit nor exact measure.

I said also that our means of providing for our wants—the gifts of nature, our faculties, activity, discernment, foresight—had no precise measure. Each of these elements is variable in itself—it differs in different men—it varies from hour to hour in the same individual,—so that the whole forms an aggregate which is mobility itself.

If, again, we consider what the circumstances are which influence value—utility, labour, rarity, judgment—and reflect that there is not one of these circumstances which does not vary *ad infinitum*, we may well ask why men should set themselves so pertinaciously to try to discover a fixed measure of Value?

It would be singular, indeed, if we were to find fixity in a mean term composed of variable elements, and which is nothing else than a Relation between two extreme terms more variable still!

The Economists, then, who go in pursuit of an *absolute measure of value* are pursuing a chimera; and, what is more, a thing which, if found, would be positively useless. Universal practice has adopted gold and silver as standards, although practical men are not ignorant how variable is the value of these metals. But of what importance is the variability of the measure, if, affecting equally and in the same manner the two objects which are exchanged, it does not interfere with the fairness and equity of the exchange? It is a *mean proportional*, which may rise or fall, without, on that account, failing to perform its office, which is to show the *Relation* of two extremes.

The design of the science is not, like that of exchange, to discover the *present Relation of two services*, for, in that case, money would answer the purpose in view. What the science aims at discovering is *the Relation between Effort and Satisfaction;* and for this purpose, a measure of value, did it exist, would teach us nothing, for the effort brings always to the satisfaction a varying

proportion of gratuitous utility which has no value. It is because this element of our well-being has been lost sight of that the majority of writers have deplored the absence of a measure of Value. They have not reflected that it would not enable them to answer the question proposed—What is the comparative Wealth or prosperity of two classes, of two countries, of two generations?

In order to resolve that question, the science would require a measure which should reveal to it not only *the relation of two services*, which might be the vehicle of very different amounts of gratuitous utility, but the relation *of the Effort to the Satisfaction*, and that measure could be no other than the effort itself, or labour.

But how can labour serve as a measure? Is it not itself a most variable element? Is it not more or less skilful, laborious, precarious, dangerous, repugnant? Does it not require, more or less, the intervention of certain intellectual faculties, of certain moral virtues? and, according as it is influenced by these circumstances, is it not rewarded by a remuneration which is in the highest degree variable?

There is one species of labour which, at all times, and in all places, is identically the same, and it is that which must serve as a type. I mean labour the most simple, rude, primitive, muscular —that which is freest from all natural co-operation—that which every man can execute—that which renders services of a kind which one can render to himself—that which exacts no exceptional force or skill, and requires no apprenticeship,—industry such as is found in the very earliest stages of society: the work, in short, of the simple day-labourer. That kind of labour is everywhere the most abundantly supplied, the least special, the most homogeneous, and the worst remunerated. Wages in all other departments are proportioned and graduated on this basis, and increase with every circumstance which adds to its importance.

If, then, we wish to compare two social states with each other, we cannot have recourse to a *standard of value*, and for two reasons, the one as logical as the other—first, because there is none; and, secondly, because, if there were, it would give a wrong answer to our question, neglecting, as it must, a considerable and progressive element in human prosperity—gratuitous utility.

What we must do, on the contrary, is to put Value altogether out of sight, particularly the consideration of money; and ask the question, What, in such and such a country, and at such and such

an epoch, is the amount of each kind of special utility, and the sum total of all utilities, which correspond to a given amount of unskilled labour? In other words, what amount of material comfort and prosperity can an unskilled workman earn as the reward of his daily toil?

We may affirm that the natural social order is harmonious, and goes on improving, if, on the one hand, the number of unskilled labourers, receiving the smallest possible remuneration, continues to diminish; and if, on the other, that remuneration, measured not in value or in money, but in real satisfactions, continues constantly on the increase.*

The ancients have well described all the combinations of Exchange:—

Do ut des (commodity against commodity), *Do ut facias* (commodity against service), *Facio ut des* (service against commodity), *Facio ut facias* (service against service).†

Seeing that products and services are thus exchanged for one another, it is quite necessary that they should have something in common, something by which they can be compared and estimated—namely, *Value*.

But value is always identically the same. Whether it be in the product or in the service, it has always the same origin and foundation.

This being so, we may ask, is Value originally and essentially in the *commodity*, and is it only by analogy that we extend the notion to the *service*?

Or, on the contrary, does Value reside in the service, and is it not mixed up and amalgamated with the product, simply and exclusively because the service is so?

Some people seem to think that this is a question of pure subtilty. We shall see by and by. At present I shall only observe, that it would be strange, if, in Political Economy, a good or a bad definition of Value were a matter of indifference.

I cannot doubt that, at the outset, Political Economists thought they discovered value rather in the product, as such, than in the matter of the product. The Physiocrates [the *Économistes* of Quesnay's school] attributed value exclusively to land, and stigmatized as *sterile* such classes as added nothing to matter,—so strictly in their eyes were *value* and *matter* bound up together.

Adam Smith ought to have discarded this idea, since he makes *value* flow from *labour*. Do not pure services, services *per se*, exact labour, and, consequently, do they not imply value? Near to the truth as Smith had come, he did not make himself master of it; for, besides pronouncing formally that labour, in order to possess value, must be applied to matter, to something physically tangible and capable of accumulation, we know that, like the Physiocrates, he ranked those who simply render services among the unproductive classes.

These classes, in fact, occupy a prominent position in the Wealth of Nations. But this only shows us that the author, after having given a definition, found himself straitened by it, and, consequently, that that definition is erroneous. Adam Smith would not have gained his great and just renown had he not written his

* What follows was intended by the author to form part of this chapter.

† These are the words by which the Roman lawyers designated what they termed *innominate* contracts, as distinguished from contracts with known names, as *purchase* and *sale*, *letting*, *hiring*, *borrowing*, *lending*, &c.—TRANSLATOR.

magnificent chapters on Education, on the Clergy, and on Public Services, and if he had, in treating of Wealth, confined himself within the limits of his own definition. Happily, by this inconsistency, he freed himself from the fetters which his premises imposed upon him. This always happens. A man of genius who sets out with a false principle never escapes inconsistency, without which he would get deeper and deeper into error, and, far from appearing a man of genius, would show himself no longer a man of sense.

As Adam Smith advanced a step beyond the Physiocrates, Jean Baptiste Say advanced a step beyond Smith. By degrees Say was led to refer value to services, but only by way of analogy. It is in the product that he discovers true value, and nothing shows this better than his whimsical denomination of services as "immaterial products"—two words which absolutely shriek out on finding themselves side by side. Say, in the outset, agrees with Smith; for the entire theory of the master is to be found in the first ten lines of the work of the disciple.* But he thought and meditated on the subject for thirty years, and he made progress. He approximated more and more to the truth, without ever fully attaining it.

Moreover, we might have imagined that Say did his duty as an Economist as well by referring the value of the service to the product, as by referring the value of the product to the service, if the Socialist propaganda, founding on his own deductions, had not come to reveal to us the insufficiency and the danger of his principle.

The question I propose, then, is this:—Seeing that certain products are possessed of value, seeing that certain services are possessed of value, and seeing that value is one and identical, and can have but one origin, one foundation, one explanation,—is this origin, this explanation, to be found in the product or in the service?

The reply to that question is obvious, and for this unanswerable reason, that every product which has value implies service, but every service does not necessarily imply a product.

This appears to me mathematically certain—conclusive.

A service, as such, has value, whether it assume a material form or not.

A material object has value if, in transferring it to another, we render him a service,—if not, it has no value.

Then value does not proceed from the material object to the service, but from the service to the material object.

Nor is this all. Nothing is more easily explained than this pre-eminence, this priority, given to the service over the product, so far as value is concerned. We shall immediately see that this is owing to a circumstance which might have been easily perceived, but which has not been observed, just because it is under our eyes. It is nothing else than that foresight which is natural to man, and in virtue of which, in place of limiting himself to the services which are demanded of him, he prepares himself beforehand to render those services which he foresees are likely to be demanded. It is thus that the *facio ut facias* transforms itself into the *do ut des*, without its ceasing to be the dominant fact which explains the whole transaction.

John says to Peter, I want a cup. I could make it for myself, but if you will make it for me, you will render me a service, for which I will pay you by an equivalent service.

Peter accepts the offer, and, in consequence, sets out in quest of suitable materials, mixes them, manipulates them, and, in fine, makes the article which John wants.

* Traité d'Economie Politique, p. 1.

It is very evident that, here, it is the service which determines the value. The dominant word in the transaction is *facio*. And if, afterwards, the value is incorporated with the product, it is only because it flows from the service, which combines the labour executed by Peter with the labour saved to John.

Now, it may happen that John may make frequently the same proposal to Peter, and that other people may also make it; so that Peter can foresee with certainty the kind of services which will be demanded of him, and prepare himself for rendering them. He may say, I have acquired a certain degree of skill in making cups. Experience tells me that cups supply a want which must be satisfied, and I am therefore enabled to manufacture them beforehand.

Henceforth John says no longer to Peter *facio ut facias*, but *facio ut des*. If he in turn has foreseen the wants of Peter, and laboured beforehand to provide for them, he can then say *do ut des*.

But in what respect, I ask, does this progress, which flows from human foresight, change the nature and origin of value? Does service cease to be its foundation and measure? As regards the true idea of value, what difference does it make whether Peter, before he makes the cup, waits till there is a demand for it, or, foreseeing a future demand, manufactures the article beforehand?

There is another remark which I would make here. In human life, inexperience and thoughtlessness precede experience and foresight. It is only in the course of time that men are enabled to foresee each other's wants, and to make preparations for satisfying them. Logically, the *facio ut facias* must precede the *do ut des*. The latter is at once the fruit and the evidence of a certain amount of knowledge diffused, of experience acquired, of political security obtained, of a certain confidence in the future,—in a word, of a certain degree of civilisation. This social prescience, this faith in a future *demand*, which causes us to provide a present *supply;* this sort of intuitive acquaintance with statistics which each possesses in a greater or less degree, and which establishes a surprising equilibrium between our wants and the means of supplying them, is one of the most powerful and efficacious promoters of human improvement. To it we owe the division of labour, or at least the separation of trades and professions. To it we owe one of the advantages which men seek for with the greatest ardour, the fixity of remuneration, under the form of *wages* as regards labour, and *interest* as regards capital. To it we are indebted for the institution of credit, transactions having reference to the future, those which are designed to equalize risk, &c. It is surprising, in an Economical point of view, that this noble attribute of man, Foresight, has not been made more the subject of remark. This arises, as Rousseau has said, from the difficulty we experience in observing the medium in which we live and move, and which forms our natural atmosphere. We notice only exceptional appearances and abnormal facts, while we allow to pass unperceived those which act permanently around us, upon us, and within us, and which modify profoundly both individual men and society at large.

To return to the subject which at present engages us. It may be that human foresight, in its infinite diffusion, tends more and more to substitute the *do ut des* for the *facio ut facias;* but we must never forget that it is in the primitive and *necessary* form of exchange that the notion of value first makes its appearance, that this primitive form is that of reciprocal service; and that, after all, as regards exchange, the product is only a *service foreseen* and provided for.

But although I have shown that value is not inherent in matter, and cannot be classed among its attributes, I am far from maintaining that it does not pass from the *service* to the *product*, so as (if I may be allowed the expression) to become incorporated with it. I hope my opponents will not believe that I am pedant enough to wish to exclude from common language such phrases as these—gold *has*

value, wheat *has value*, land *has value*. But I have a right to demand of science why this is so; and if I am answered, because gold, wheat, and land possess in themselves intrinsic *value*, then I think I have a right to say—"You are mistaken, and your error is dangerous. You are mistaken, for there are gold and land which are destitute of value, gold and land which have not yet had any human labour bestowed upon them. Your error is dangerous, for it leads men to regard what is simply a right to a reciprocity of services as a usurpation of the gratuitous gifts of God."

I am quite willing, then, to acknowledge that products are possessed of value, provided you grant me that it is not essential to them, and that it attaches itself to services, and proceeds from them.

This is so true, that a very important consequence, and one which is fundamental in Political Economy, flows from it,—a consequence which has not been, and indeed could not be, remarked. It is this:—

Where value has passed from the service to the product, it undergoes in the product all the risks and chances to which it is subject in the service itself.

It is not fixed in the product, as it would have been had it been one of its own intrinsic qualities. It is essentially variable; it may rise indefinitely, or it may fall until it disappears altogether, just as the species of service to which it owes its origin would have done.

The man who makes a cup to-day for the purpose of selling it a year hence, confers value on it, and that value is determined by that of the service—not the value which the service possesses at the present moment, but that which it will possess at the end of the year. If at the time when the cup comes to be sold such services are more in demand, the cup will be worth more, or it will be depreciated in the opposite case.

This is the reason why man is constantly stimulated to exercise foresight, in order to turn it to account. He has always in perspective a possible rise or fall of value,—a recompense for just and sagacious prevision, and chastisement when it is erroneous. And, observe, his success or failure coincides with the public good or the public detriment. If his foresight has been well directed, if he has made preparations beforehand to give society the benefit of services which are more in request, more appreciated, more efficacious, which supply more adequately wants which are deeply felt, he has contributed to diminish the scarcity, to augment the abundance, of that description of service, and to bring it within the reach of a greater number of persons at less expense. If, on the other hand, he is mistaken in his calculations for the future, he contributes, by his competition, to depress still farther those services for which there is little demand. He only effects, and at his own expense, a negative good,—he advertises the public that a certain description of wants no longer call for the exertion of much social activity, which activity must now take another direction, or go without recompense.

This remarkable fact—that *value, incorporated* in a product, depends on the value of the kind of service to which it owes its origin—is of the very highest importance, not only because it demonstrates more and more clearly the theory that the principle of value resides in the service, but because it explains, easily and satisfactorily, phenomena which other systems regard as abnormal and exceptional.

When once the product has been thrown upon the market of the world, do the general tendencies of society operate towards elevating or towards depressing its *value*? This is to ask whether the particular kind of services which have engendered this value are liable to become more or less appreciated, and better or worse remunerated. The one is as possible as the other, and it is this which opens an unlimited field to human foresight.

This we may remark at least, that the general law of beings, capable of making experiments, of acquiring information, and of rectifying mistakes, is progress. The probability, then, is, that at any given period a certain amount of time and pains will effect greater results than were effected by the same agency at an anterior period; whence we may conclude that the prevailing tendency *of value, incorporated* with a commodity, is to fall. If, for example, we suppose the cup which I took by way of illustration, and as a symbol of other products, to have been made many years ago, the probability is that it has undergone depreciation, inasmuch as we have at the present day more resources for the manufacture of such articles, more skill, better tools, capital obtained on easier terms, and a more extended division of labour. In this way the person who wishes to obtain the cup does not say to its possessor, Tell me the exact amount of labour (quantity and quality both taken into account) which that cup has cost you, in order that I may remunerate you accordingly. No, he says, Now-a-days, in consequence of the progress of art, I can make for myself, or procure by exchange, a similar cup at the expense of so much labour of such a quality; and that is the limit of the remuneration which I can consent to give you.

Hence it follows that all labour incorporated with commodities, in other words, all accumulated labour, all capital, has a tendency to become depreciated in presence of services naturally improvable and increasingly and progressively productive; and that, in exchanging present labour against anterior labour, the advantage is generally on the side of present labour, as it ought to be, seeing that it renders a greater amount of service.

This shows us how empty are the declamations which we hear continually directed against the value of landed property. That value differs from other values in nothing—neither in its origin, nor in its nature, nor in the general law of its slow depreciation, as compared with the labour which it originally cost.

It represents anterior services,—the clearing away of trees and stones, draining, enclosing, levelling, manuring, building: it demands the recompense of these services. But that recompense is not regulated with reference to the labour which has been actually performed. The landed proprietor does not say, "Give me in exchange for this land as much labour as it has received from me." (But he would so express himself if, according to Adam Smith's theory, value came from labour, and were proportional to it.) Much less does he say, as Ricardo and a number of economists suppose, "Give me first of all as much labour as this land has had bestowed upon it, and a certain amount of labour over and above, as an equivalent for the natural and inherent powers of the soil." No, the proprietor, who represents all the possessors of the land who have preceded him, up to those who made the first clearance, is obliged, in their name, to hold this humble language:—

"We have prepared services, and what we ask is to exchange these for equivalent services. We worked hard formerly, for in our days we were not acquainted with your powerful means of execution—there were no roads—we were forced to do everything by muscular exertion. Much sweat and toil, many human lives, are buried under these furrows. But we do not expect from you labour for labour—we have no means of effecting an exchange on these terms. We are quite aware that the labour bestowed on land now-a-days, whether in this country or abroad, is much more perfect and much more productive than formerly. All that we ask, and what you clearly cannot refuse us, is, that our anterior labour and the new labour shall be exchanged, not in proportion to their comparative duration and intensity, but proportionally to their results, so that we may both receive the same remuneration for the same service. By this arrangement we are losers as regards labour, seeing that three or four times more of ours than of yours is required to ac-

complish the same service; but we have no choice, and can no longer effect the exchange on any other terms."

And, in point of fact, this represents the actual state of things. If we could form an exact estimate of the amount of efforts, of incessant labour, and toil, expended in bringing each acre of our land to its present state of productiveness, we should be thoroughly convinced that the man who purchases that land does not give labour for labour—at least in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred.

I add this qualification, because we must not forget that an *incorporated service* may gain value as well as lose it. And although the general tendency be towards depreciation, nevertheless the opposite phenomenon manifests itself sometimes, in exceptional circumstances, as well in the case of land as of anything else, and this without violating the law of justice, or affording adequate cause for the cry of monopoly.

Services always intervene to bring out the principle of value. In most cases the anterior labour probably renders a less amount of service than the new labour, but this is not an absolute law which admits of no exception. If the anterior labour renders a less amount of service than the new, as is nearly always the case, a greater quantity of the first than of the second must be thrown into the scale to establish the equiponderance, seeing that the equiponderance is regulated by services. But if it happen, as it sometimes may, that the anterior labour renders greater service than the new, the latter must make up for this by the sacrifice of quantity. . . . .—*MS. note, found among the papers of the Author.*

VI.

WEALTH.

We have seen that in every commodity which is adapted to satisfy our wants and desires, there are two things to be considered and distinguished: what nature does, and what man does,—what is gratuitous, and what is onerous—the gift of God and the service of man—*utility* and *value*. In the same commodity the one may be immense, and the other imperceptible. The former remaining invariable, the latter may be indefinitely diminished; and is diminished, in fact, as often as an ingenious process or invention enables us to obtain the same result with less effort.

One of the greatest difficulties, one of the most fertile sources of misunderstanding, controversy, and error, here presents itself to us at the very threshold of the science—

What is *wealth?*

Are we *rich* in proportion to the utilities which we have at our disposal,—that is, in proportion to the wants and desires which we have the means of satisfying? "A man is rich or poor," says Adam Smith, "according as he possesses a greater or smaller amount of *useful* commodities which minister to his enjoyments."

Are we *rich* in proportion to the *values* which we possess,—that is to say, the *services* which we can command? "Wealth," says J. B. Say, "is in proportion to Value. It is great if the sum of the value of which it is composed is great—it is small if the value be small."

The vulgar employ the word Wealth in two senses. Sometimes we hear them say—"The abundance of water is Wealth to such a country." In this case, they are thinking only of Utility. But when one wishes to reckon up his own wealth, he makes what is called an Inventory, in which only commercial Value is taken into account.

With deference to the *savants*, I believe that the vulgar are right for once. Wealth is either *actual* or *relative*. In the first point of view, we judge of it by our satisfactions. Mankind become richer in proportion as they acquire a greater amount of ease or material prosperity, whatever be the commodities by which it is procured. But do you wish to know what proportional share each man has in the general prosperity; in other words, his *relative wealth?* This is simply a relation, which value alone reveals, because value is itself a relation.

Our science has to do with the general welfare and prosperity of men, with the proportion which exists between their Efforts and their Satisfactions,—a proportion which the progressive participation of gratuitous utility in the business of production modifies advantageously. You cannot, then, exclude this element from the idea of Wealth. In a scientific point of view, actual or effective wealth is not the sum of values, but the aggregate of the utilities, gratuitous and onerous, which are attached to these values. As regards satisfactions,—that is to say, as regards actual results of wealth, we are as much enriched by the value annihilated by progress as by that which still subsists.

In the ordinary transactions of life, we cease to take utility into account, in proportion as that utility becomes *gratuitous* by the lowering of value. Why? because what is gratuitous is *common*, and what is common alters in no respect each man's share or proportion of actual or effective wealth. We do not exchange what is common to all; and as in our every-day transactions we only require to be made acquainted with the proportion which value establishes, we take no account of anything else.

This subject gave rise to a controversy between Ricardo and J. B. Say. Ricardo gave to the word Wealth the sense of Utility—Say, that of Value. The exclusive triumph of one of these champions was impossible, since the word admits of both senses, according as we regard wealth as actual or relative.

But it is necessary to remark, and the more so on account of the great authority of Say in these matters, that if we confound *wealth* (in the sense of actual or effective prosperity) with *value*; above all, if we affirm that the one is proportional to the other, we shall be apt to give the science a wrong direction. The works of second-rate Economists, and those of the Socialists, show this but too clearly. To set out by concealing from view precisely that which forms the fairest patrimony of the human race, is an unfor-

tunate beginning. It leads us to consider as annihilated that portion of wealth which progress renders common to all, and exposes us to the danger of falling into a *petitio principii*, and studying Political Economy backwards,—the *end*, the design, which it is our object to attain, being perpetually confounded with the *obstacle* which impedes our efforts.

In truth, but for the existence of obstacles, there could be no such thing as Value, which is the sign, the symptom, the witness, the proof of our native weakness. It reminds us incessantly of the decree which went forth in the beginning—"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." With reference to Omnipotence, the words *Effort*, *Service*, and, consequently, *Value*, have no meaning. As regards ourselves, we live in an atmosphere of *utilities*, of which utilities the greater part are gratuitous, but there are others which we can acquire only by an onerous title. Obstacles are interposed between these utilities and the wants to which they minister. We are condemned either to forego the Utility, or vanquish these obstacles by Efforts. Sweat must drop from the brow before bread can be eaten, whether the toil be undergone by ourselves or by others for our benefit.

The greater the amount of value we find existing in a country, the greater evidence we have that obstacles have been surmounted, but the greater evidence we also have that there are obstacles to surmount. Are we to go so far as to say that these obstacles constitute Wealth, because, apart from them, Value would have no existence?

We may suppose two countries. One of them possesses the means of enjoyment to a greater extent than the other with a less amount of Value, because it is favoured by nature, and it has fewer obstacles to overcome. Which is the richer?

Or, to put a stronger case, let us suppose the same people at different periods of their history. The obstacles to be overcome are the same at both periods. But, now a-days, they surmount these obstacles with so much greater facility; they execute, for instance, the work of transport, of tillage, of manufactures, at so much less an expense of effort that values are considerably reduced. There are two courses, then, which a people in such a situation may take,—they may content themselves with the same amount of enjoyments as formerly,—progress in that case, resolving itself simply into the attainment of additional leisure; and, in such circumstances, should we be authorized to say that the Wealth of

the society had retrograded because it is possessed of a smaller amount of value? Or, they may devote the efforts which progress and improvement have rendered disposable to the increase and extension of their enjoyments; but should we be warranted to conclude that, because the amount of values had remained stationary, the wealth of the society had remained stationary also? It is to this result, however, that we tend if we confound the two things, *Riches* and *Value.*

Political Economists may here find themselves in a dilemma. Are we to measure wealth by Satisfactions realized, or by Values created?

Were no obstacles interposed between utilities and desires, there would be neither efforts, nor services, nor Values in our case, any more than in that of God and nature. In such circumstances, were wealth estimated by the satisfactions realized, mankind, like nature, would be in possession of infinite riches; but, if estimated by the values created, they would be deprived of wealth altogether. An economist who adopted the first view might pronounce us *infinitely rich*,—another, who adopted the second view, might pronounce us *infinitely poor.*

The infinite, it is true, is in no respect an attribute of humanity. But mankind direct their exertions to certain ends; they make efforts, they have tendencies, they gravitate towards progressive Wealth or progressive Poverty. Now, how could Economists make themselves mutually intelligible if this successive diminution of effort in relation to result, of labour to be undergone or to be remunerated; in a word, of value, were considered by some of them as a progress towards Wealth, and by others as a descent towards Poverty?

Did the difficulty, indeed, concern only Economists, we might say, let them settle the matter among themselves. But legislators and governments have every day to introduce measures which exercise a serious influence on human affairs; and in what condition should we be if these measures were taken in the absence of that light which enables us to distinguish Riches from Poverty?

I affirm that the theory which defines Wealth as Value is only the glorification of Obstacles. Its syllogism is this: "Wealth is in proportion to Value, value to efforts, efforts to obstacles; *ergo*, wealth is in proportion to obstacles." I affirm also that, by reason of the division of labour, which includes the case of every one who exercises a trade or profession, the illusion thus created is very

difficult to be got rid of. We all of us see that the services which we render are called forth by some obstacle, some want, some suffering,—those of the physician by disease, those of the agricultural labourer by hunger, those of the manufacturer of clothing by cold, those of the carrier by distance, those of the advocate by injustice, those of the soldier by danger to his country. There is not, in fact, a single obstacle, the disappearance of which does not prove very inopportune and very troublesome to somebody, or which does not even appear fatal in a public point of view, because it seems to dry up a source of employment, of services, of values, of wealth. Very few Economists have been able to preserve themselves entirely from this illusion; and if the science shall ever succeed in dispelling it, its practical mission will have been fulfilled. For I venture to make a third affirmation—namely, that our official practice is saturated with this theory, and that when governments believe it to be their duty to favour certain classes, certain professions, or certain manufactures, they have no other mode of accomplishing their object than by setting up Obstacles, in order to give to particular branches of industry additional development, in order to enlarge artificially the circle of services to which the community is forced to have recourse,—and thus to increase Value, falsely assumed as synonymous with Wealth.

And, in fact, it is quite true that such legislation is useful to the classes which are favoured by it—they exult in it—congratulate each other upon it,—and what is the consequence? Why this, that the same favours are successively accorded to all other classes.

What more natural than to confound Utility with Value, and Value with Riches! The science has never encountered a snare which she has less suspected. For what has happened? At every step of progress the reasoning has been this: "The obstacle is diminished, then effort is lessened, then value is lessened, then utility is lessened, then wealth is lessened,—then we are the most unfortunate people in the world to have taken it into our heads to invent and exchange, to have five fingers in place of three, and two hands in place of one; and then it is necessary to engage government, which is in possession of force, to take order with this abuse."

This Political Economy *à rebours*—this Political Economy read backwards—is the staple of many of our journals, and the life of legislative assemblies. It has misled the candid and philanthropic

Sismondi, and we find it very logically set forth in the work of M. de Saint-Chamans.

"There are two kinds of national wealth," he tells us. "If we have regard only to *useful* products with reference to their quantity, their abundance, we have to do with a species of wealth which procures enjoyments to society, and which I shall denominate *the Wealth of enjoyment.*

"If we regard products with reference to their exchangeable value, or simply with reference to their value, we have to do with a species of Wealth which procures values to society, and which I call *the Wealth of value.*

"*It is this last species of Wealth which forms the special subject of Political Economy, and it is with it, above all, that governments have to do.*"

This being so, how are Economists and Statesmen to proceed? The first are to point out the means of increasing this species of riches, this *wealth of value;* the second to set about adopting these means.

But this kind of wealth bears proportion to efforts, and efforts bear proportion to obstacles. Political Economy, then, is to teach, and Government to contrive, how to multiply obstacles. M. de Saint-Chamans does not flinch in the least from this consequence.

Does exchange facilitate our acquiring more of the *wealth of enjoyment* with less of the *wealth of value?* We must, then, counteract this tendency of exchange.*

Is there any portion of gratuitous Utility which we can replace by onerous Utility; for example, by prohibiting the use of a tool or a machine? We must not fail to do so; for it is very evident, he says, that if machinery augments the *wealth of enjoyment,* it diminishes the *wealth of value.* "*Let us bless the obstacles* which the dearness and scarcity of fuel in this country has opposed to the multiplication of steam-engines."†

Has nature favoured us in any particular respect? It is our misfortune; for, by that means, we are deprived of the opportunity of exerting ourselves. "I avow that I could desire to see manufactured by manual labour, forced exertion, and the sweat of the brow, things that are now produced without trouble and spontaneously."‡

* *Nouvel essai sur la Richesse des Nations*, p. 438.

† *Ib.* p. 263. ‡ *Ib.* p. 456.

What a misfortune, then, is it for us that we are not obliged to manufacture the water which we drink! It would have been a fine opportunity of producing the *wealth of value.* Happily we take our revenge upon wine. "Discover the secret of drawing wine from springs in the earth as abundantly as you draw water, and you will soon see that this fine order of things will ruin a fourth part of France."*

According to the ideas which this Economist sets forth with such *naïveté*, there are many methods, and very simple methods too, of obliging men to create what he terms the *wealth of value.*

The first is to deprive them of what they have. "If taxation lays hold of money where it is plentiful, to distribute it where it is scarce, it is useful, and far from being a loss, *it is a gain*, to the state."†

The second is to dissipate what you take. "Luxury and prodigality, which are so hurtful to individual fortunes, *benefit* public wealth. You teach me a fine moral lesson, it may be said—I have no such pretension—my business is with Political Economy, and not with morals. You seek the means of rendering nations richer, and I preach up luxury."‡

A more prompt method still is to destroy the wealth which you take from the tax-payer by good sweeping wars. "If you grant me that the expenditure of prodigals is as productive as any other, and that the expenditure of governments is equally productive, . . . you will no longer be astonished at the wealth of England after so expensive a war."§

But, as tending to promote the creation of this *Wealth of value*, all these means—taxes, luxury, wars—must hide their diminished heads before an expedient infinitely more efficacious — namely, *conflagration.*

"To build is a great source of wealth, because it supplies revenues to proprietors, who furnish the materials, to workmen, and to divers classes of artisans and artists. Melon cites Sir William Petty, who regards, as a *national profit*, the labour employed in rebuilding the streets of London after the great fire which consumed two-thirds of the city, and he estimates it (the profit!) at a million sterling per annum (in money of 1666) during four years, and this without the least injury having been done to other branches of trade. Without regarding this pecuniary estimate *of profit* as quite

* *Nouvel essai sur la Richesse des Nations*, p. 456.
† *Ib.* p. 161. ‡ *Ib.* p. 168. § *Ib.* p. 168.

accurate," adds M. de Saint-Chamans, "it is certain at least that this event had no detrimental effect upon the wealth of England at that period. . . . The result stated by Sir W. Petty is not impossible, seeing that the necessity of rebuilding London must have created a large amount of new revenues."*

All Economists, who set out by confounding *wealth* with *value*, must infallibly arrive at the same conclusions, if they are logical; but they are not logical; for on the road of absurdity men of any common sense always sooner or later stop short. M. de Saint-Chamans seems himself to recede a little before the consequences of his principle, when it lands him in a eulogium on conflagration. We see that he hesitates, and contents himself with a negative panegyric. He should have carried out his principle to its logical conclusions, and told us roundly what he so clearly indicates.

Of all our Economists, M. de Sismondi has succumbed to the difficulty now under consideration in the manner most to be regretted. Like M. de Saint-Chamans, he set out with the idea that value forms an element of wealth; and, like him, he has built upon this datum a Political Economy *à rebours*, denouncing everything which tends to diminish value. Sismondi, like Saint-Chamans, exalts obstacles, proscribes machinery, anathematizes exchange, competition, and liberty, extols luxury and taxation, and arrives at length at this conclusion, that the more we possess the poorer we become.†

From beginning to end of his work, however, M. de Sismondi seems to have a lurking consciousness that he is mistaken, and that a dark veil may have interposed itself between his mind and the truth. He does not venture, like M. de Saint-Chamans, to

* *Nouvel essai sur la Richesse des Nations*, p. 63.

† The Earl of Lauderdale, from adopting the false principle which the author here exposes, fell into the same error, maintaining that "*an increase of riches*, when arising from alterations in the quantity of commodities, is always a proof of the immediate *diminution of wealth*," and that a diminution of riches is evidence of an immediate increase of wealth; and that "in proportion as the *riches* of individuals are increased by an augmentation of the *value* of any commodity, the wealth of the nation is generally diminished; and in proportion as the mass of individual *riches* is diminished by the diminution of the *value* of any commodity, the national opulence is generally increased." This melancholy paradox Lord Lauderdale maintained stoutly in a set treatise. See *Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Public Wealth by the Earl of Lauderdale*. Edition 1804, p. 50. Mr Ricardo has given an exposition of the "Distinctive Properties of Value and Riches" in his work on the *Principles of Political Economy*. Third Edition, p. 320.—TRANSLATOR.

announce roughly and bluntly the consequences of his principle—he hesitates, and is troubled. He asks himself sometimes if it is possible that all men from the beginning of the world have been in error, and on the road to self-destruction, in seeking to diminish the proportion which Effort bears to Satisfaction,—that is to say, *value*. At once the friend and the enemy of liberty, he fears it, since the abundance which depreciates value leads to universal poverty, and yet he knows not how to set about the destruction of this fatal liberty. He thus arrives at the confines of socialism and artificial organization, and insinuates that government and science should regulate and control everything. Then he sees the danger of the advice he is giving, retracts it, and ends by falling into despair, exclaiming—"Liberty leads to the abyss of poverty—Constraint is as impossible as it is useless—there is no escape." In truth and reality, there is none, if Value be Riches; in other words, if the obstacle to prosperity be prosperity itself,—that is to say, if Evil be Good.

The latest writer, as far as I know, who has stirred this question is M. Proudhon. It made the fortune of his book, *Des Contradictions Économiques*. Never was there a finer opportunity of seizing a paradox by the forelock, and snapping his fingers at science. Never was there a fairer occasion of asking—"Do you see in the increase of value a good or an evil? *Quidquid dixeris argumentabor.*" Just think what a treat!*

"I call upon any earnest Economist to explain to me, otherwise than by varying and repeating the question, why value diminishes in proportion as production increases, and *vice versa*. . . . In technical phrase, value in use and value in exchange, although necessary to each other, are in an inverse ratio to each other. . . . . Value in use and value in exchange remain, then, fatally enchained, although in their own nature they tend to exclude each other."

"For this contradiction, which is inherent in the notion of value, no cause can be assigned, nor is any explanation of it possible. . . From the data, that man has need of a great variety of commodities, and that he must provide them by his labour, the necessary conclusion is, that there exists an antagonism between value in use and value in exchange, and from this antagonism a

* "Do you take the side of Competition, you are wrong—do you argue against Competition, you are still wrong; which means that you are always right."—P. J. Proudhon, *Contradictions Économiques*, p. 182.

contradiction arises at the very threshold of Political Economy. No amount of intelligence, no agency, divine or human, can make it otherwise. In place, then, of beating about for a useless explanation, let us content ourselves with pointing out clearly the *necessity of the contradiction.*"

We know that the grand discovery of M. Proudhon is, that everything is at once true and false, good and bad, legitimate and illegitimate, that there exists no principle which is not self-contradictory, and that contradiction lurks not only in erroneous theories, but in the very essence of things,—"it is the pure expression of necessity, the peculiar law of existence," &c.; so that it is inevitable, and would be incurable, rationally, but for *progression*, and, practically, but for the *Banque du Peuple.* Nature is a contradiction, liberty a contradiction, competition a contradiction, property a contradiction,—value, credit, monopoly, community, all contradictions. When M. Proudhon achieved this wonderful discovery his heart must have leaped for joy; for since contradiction is everywhere and in everything, he can never want something to gainsay, which for him is the supreme good. He said to me one day, "I should rather like to go to heaven, but I fear that everybody there will be of one mind, and I should find nobody to argue with."

We must confess that the subject of Value gave him an excellent opportunity of indulging his taste. But, with great deference to him, the contradictions and paradoxes to which the word Value has given rise are to be found in the false theories which have been constructed, and not at all, as he would have us believe, in the nature of things.

Theorists have set out, in the first instance, by confounding Value with Utility,—that is to say, evil with good; for utility is the desired result, and value springs from the obstacle which is interposed between the desire and the result. This was their first error, and, when they perceived the consequences of it, they thought to obviate the difficulty by imagining a distinction between value in use and value in exchange,—an unwieldy tautology, which had the great fault of attaching the same word—Value—to two opposite phenomena.

But if, putting aside these subtilties, we adhere strictly to facts, what do we perceive? Nothing, assuredly, but what is quite natural and consistent.

A man, we shall suppose, works exclusively for himself. If he

If we could form, once for all, two classes of utilities, putting on the one side all those which are gratuitous, and on the other all those which are onerous, we should form, at the same time, two classes of Wealth, which we should denominate, with M. Say, *Natural Wealth* and *Social Wealth;* or else, with M. de Saint-Chamans, the *Wealth of Enjoyment* and the *Wealth of Value;* after which, as these authors propose, we should have nothing more to do with the first of these classes.

"Things which are accessible to all," says M. Say, "and which every one may enjoy at pleasure, without being forced to acquire them, and without the fear of exhausting them, such as air, water, the light of the sun, &c., are the gratuitous gifts of nature, and may be denominated *Natural Wealth.* As these can be neither produced nor distributed, nor consumed by us, *they come not within the domain of Political Economy.*

"The things which this science has to do with are things which we possess, and which have a recognised value. These we denominate *Social Wealth,* because they exist only among men united in society."

"It is the *Wealth of Value,*" says M. de Saint-Chamans, "*which forms the special subject of Political Economy,* and whenever in this work I mention Wealth without being more specific, I mean that description of it."

Nearly all Economists have taken the same view.

"The most striking distinction," says Storch, "which presents itself in the outset, is, that there are certain kinds of value which are capable of appropriation, and other kinds which are not so.* *The first alone are the subject of Political Economy,* for the analysis of the others would furnish no result worthy of the attention of the statesman."

For my own part, I think that that portion of utility which, in the progress of society, ceases to be onerous and to possess value, but which does not on that account cease to be utility, and is about to fall into the domain of the *common* and *gratuitous,* is precisely that which should constantly attract the attention of the statesman and of the Economist. If it do not, in place of penetrating and comprehending the great results which affect and elevate the human race, the science will be left to deal with what is quite

* Always this perpetual and lamentable confusion between Value and Utility! I can show you many utilities which are not appropriated, but I defy you to show me in the whole world a single *value* which has not a proprietor.

contingent and flexible—with what has a tendency to diminish, if not to disappear—with a relation merely; in a word, with Value. Without being aware of it, Economists are thus led to consider only labour, obstacles, and the interest of the producer; and, what is worse, they are led to confound the interest of the producer with the interest of the public,—that is to say, to mistake evil for good, and, under the guidance of the Sismondis and Saint-Chamans, to land at length in the Utopia of the socialists, or the *Système des Contradictions* of Proudhon.

And, then, is not this line of demarcation, which you attempt to draw between the two descriptions of utility, chimerical, arbitrary, and impossible? How can you thus disjoin the co-operation of nature and that of man when they combine and get mixed up everywhere, much more when the one tends constantly to replace the other, which is precisely what constitutes progress? If economical science, so dry in some respects, in other aspects elevates and fascinates the mind, it is just because it describes the laws of this association between man and nature,—it is because it shows gratuitous utility substituting itself more and more for onerous utility, enjoyments bearing a greater and greater proportion to labour and fatigue, obstacles constantly lessening, and, along with them, value; the perpetual mistakes and miscalculations of producers more than compensated by the increasing prosperity of consumers; natural wealth, *gratuitous* and *common*, coming more and more to take the place of wealth which is *personal* and *appropriated*. What! are we to exclude from Political Economy what constitutes its religious Harmony?

Air, light, water, are gratuitous, you say. True, and if we enjoyed them under their primitive form, without making them co-operate in any of our works, we might exclude them from Political Economy just as we exclude from it the possible and probable utility of comets. But observe the progress of man. At first he is able to make air, light, water, and other natural agents co-operate very imperfectly. His satisfactions were purchased by laborious personal efforts, they exacted a large amount of labour, and they were transferred to others as important *services;* in a word, they were possessed of great *value*. By degrees, this water, this air, this light, gravitation, elasticity, caloric, electricity, vegetable life, have abandoned this state of relative inactivity. They mingle more and more with our industry. They are substituted for human labour. They do for us gratuitously what labour does

only for an onerous consideration. They annihilate value without diminishing our enjoyments. To speak in common language, what cost us a hundred francs, costs us only ten—what required ten days' labour now demands only one. The whole value thus annihilated has passed from the domain of Property to that of Community. A considerable proportion of human efforts has been set free, and placed at our disposal for other enterprises; so that with equal labour, equal services, equal value, mankind have enlarged prodigiously the circle of their enjoyments; and yet you tell me that I must eliminate and banish from the science this utility, which is gratuitous and common, which alone explains progress, as well upward as forward, if I may so speak, as well in wealth and prosperity as in freedom and equality!

We may, then, legitimately attach to the word Wealth two meanings.

Effective Wealth, real, and realizing satisfactions, or the aggregate of utilities which human labour, aided by the co-operation of natural agents, places within the reach of Society.

Relative Wealth,—that is to say, the proportional share of each in the general Riches, a share which is determined by Value.

This Economic Harmony, then, may be thus stated:

By labour the action of man is combined with the action of nature.

Utility results from that co-operation.

Each man receives a share of the general utility proportioned to the value he has created,—that is to say, to the services he has rendered; in other words, to the utility he has himself produced.

VII.

CAPITAL.

THE economic laws will be found to act on the same principle, whether we take the case of a numerous agglomeration of men or of only two individuals, or even of a single individual condemned by circumstances to live in a state of isolation.

Such an individual, if he could exist for some time in an isolated state, would be at once capitalist, employer, workman, producer, and consumer. The whole economic evolution would be accomplished in him. Observing each of the elements of which that evolution is made up—want, effort, satisfaction—gratuitous utility, and onerous utility—he would be enabled to form an idea of the entire mechanism, even when thus reduced to its greatest simplicity.

One thing is obvious enough, that he could never confound what was gratuitous with what exacted efforts; for that would imply a contradiction in terms. He would know at once when a material or a force was furnished to him by nature without the co-operation of his labour, even when his own labour was assisted by natural agents, and thus rendered more productive.

An isolated individual would never think of applying his own labour to the production of a commodity as long as he could procure it directly from nature. He would not travel a league to fetch water if he had a well at his door. For the same reason, whenever his own labour was called into requisition, he would endeavour to substitute for it, as much as he possibly could, the co-operation of natural agents.

If he constructed a canoe, he would make it of the lightest materials, in order to take advantage of the specific gravity of water. He would furnish it with a sail, that the wind might save him the trouble of rowing, &c.

In order to obtain in this way the co-operation of natural agents, tools and instruments would be wanted.

And here the isolated individual would begin to calculate. He would ask himself this question: At present I obtain a satisfaction at the expense of a given effort: when I am in possession of the proper tool or instrument, shall I obtain the same satisfaction with less effort, taking into account the labour required for the construction of the instrument itself?

No one will throw away his labour for the mere pleasure of throwing it away. Our supposed Robinson Crusoe, then, will be induced to set about constructing the instrument only if he sees clearly that, when completed, he will obtain an equal satisfaction at a smaller expense of effort, or a greater amount of satisfaction with the same effort.

One circumstance will form a great element in his calculation—the number of commodities in the production of which this instrument will assist while it lasts. He has a primary standard of comparison—the present labours to which he is subjected every time he wishes to procure the satisfaction directly and without assistance. He estimates how much labour the tool or instrument will save him on each occasion; but labour is required to make the tool, and this labour he will in his own mind spread over all the occasions on which such an instrument can be made available. The greater the number of these occasions, the stronger will be his motive for seeking the co-operation of natural agents. It is here—in this spreading of an *advance* over an aggregate of products—that we discover the principle and foundation of Interest.

When Robinson Crusoe has once made up his mind to construct the instrument, he perceives that his willingness to make it, and the advantage it is to bring him, are not enough. Tools are necessary to the manufacture of tools—iron must be hammered with iron—and so you go on, mounting from difficulty to difficulty, till you reach the first difficulty of all, which appears to be insuperable. This shows us the extreme slowness with which Capital must have been formed at the beginning, and what an enormous amount of human labour each satisfaction must originally have cost.

Again, in order to construct the instruments of labour, not only tools, but *materials* are wanted. If these materials, as for instance stones, are furnished gratuitously by nature, we must still combine them, which costs labour. But the possession of these

materials supposes, in almost every case, anterior labour both long and complicated, as in the manufacture of wool, flax, iron, lead, &c.

Nor is this all. Whilst a man is thus working for the exclusive purpose of facilitating his ulterior labour, he can do nothing to supply his present wants. Now, here we encounter an order of phenomena in which there can be no interruption. Each day the labourer must be fed, clothed, and sheltered. Robinson will perceive, then, that he can undertake nothing for the purpose of procuring the co-operation of natural forces until he has previously accumulated a stock of *provisions*. He must every day redouble his activity in the chase, and store up a portion of the game he kills, and subject himself to present privations, in order that he may have at his disposal the time requisite for the construction of the instrument he has projected. In such circumstances, it is most probable that all he will accomplish will be the construction of an instrument which is rude and imperfect, and not very well fitted for the purpose he has in view.

Afterwards, he will obtain greater facilities. Reflection and experience will teach him to work better; and the first tool he makes will furnish him with the means of fabricating others, and of accumulating provisions with greater promptitude.

Tools, materials, provisions—these, doubtless, Robinson will denominate his *Capital;* and he will readily discover that the more considerable his capital becomes, the greater command will he obtain over natural agents—that the more he makes such agents co-operate in his labour, the more will he augment his satisfactions in proportion to his efforts.

Let us now vary the hypothesis, and place ourselves in the midst of the social order. Capital is still composed of instruments of labour, materials, and provisions, without which no enterprise of any magnitude can be undertaken, either in a state of isolation, or in the social state. Those who are possessed of capital have been put in possession of it only by their labour, or by their privations; and they would not have undergone that labour (which has no connexion with present wants), they would not have imposed on themselves those privations, but with the view of obtaining ulterior advantages—with the view, for example, of procuring in larger measure the future co-operation of natural agents. On their part, to give away this capital would be to deprive themselves of the special advantage they have in view; it would be to transfer this advantage to others; it would

be to render others a *service*. We cannot, then, without abandoning the most simple principles of reason and justice, fail to see that the owners of capital have a perfect right to refuse to make this transfer unless in exchange for another *service*, freely bargained for and voluntarily agreed to. No man in the world, I believe, will dispute the equity of the *mutuality of services*, for mutuality of services is, in other words, equity. Will it be said that the transaction cannot be free and voluntary, because the man who is in possession of capital is in a position to lay down the law to the man who has none? But how is a bargain to be made? In what way are we to discover the *equivalence of services* if it be not in the case of an exchange voluntarily effected on both sides? Do you not, perceive, moreover, that the man who borrows capital, being free either to borrow it or not, will refuse to do so unless he sees it to be for his advantage, and that the loan cannot make his situation worse? The question he asks himself is evidently this: Will the employment of this capital afford me advantages which are more than sufficient to make up for the conditions which are demanded of me? Or this: Is the effort which I am now obliged to make, in order to obtain a given satisfaction, greater or less than the sum of the efforts which the loan will entail upon me—first of all, in rendering the *services* which are demanded of me by the lender, and afterwards in procuring the special satisfaction I have in view with the aid of the capital borrowed? If, taking all things into account, there be no advantage to be got, he will not borrow, he will remain as he is, and what injury is done him? He may be mistaken, you will say. Undoubtedly he may. One may be mistaken in all imaginable transactions. Are we then to abandon our liberty? If you go that length, tell us what we are to substitute for free will and free consent. Constraint? for if we give up liberty, what remains but constraint? No, you say—the judgment of a third party. Granted, on these conditions: First, that the decision of this third party, whatever name you give him, shall not be put in force by constraint. Secondly, that he be infallible, for to substitute one fallible man for another would be to no purpose; and the parties whose judgment I should least distrust in such a matter are the parties who are interested in the result. The third and last condition is, that this arbitrator shall not be paid for his services; for it would be a singular way of manifesting his sympathy for the borrower, first of all to take away from him his liberty,

and then to lay on his shoulders an additional burden as the recompense of this philanthropical service. But let us leave the question of right, and return to Political Economy.

A Capital which is composed of materials, provisions, and instruments, presents two aspects—Utility and Value. I must have failed in my exposition of the theory of value, if the reader does not understand that the man who transfers capital is paid only for its *value*, that is to say, for the service rendered in creating that capital; in other words, for the pains taken by the *cédant* combined with the pains saved to the recipient. Capi al consists of commodities or products. It assumes the name of capital only by reason of its ulterior destination. It is a great mistake to suppose that capital, as such, is a thing having an independent existence. A sack of corn is still a sack of corn, although one man sells it for revenue, and another buys it for capital. Exchange takes place on the invariable principle of value for value, service for service; and the portion of gratuitous utility which enters into the commodity is so much into the bargain. At the same time, the portion which is gratuitous has no value, and value is the only thing regarded in bargains. In this respect, transactions which have reference to capital are in no respect different from others.

This consideration opens up some admirable views with reference to the social order, but which I cannot do more than indicate here. Man, in a state of isolation, is possessed of capital only when he has brought together materials, provisions, and tools. The same thing does not hold true of man in the social state. It is enough for the latter to have rendered *services*, and to have thus the power of drawing upon society, by means of the mechanism of exchange, for equivalent services. I mean by the mechanism of exchange, money, bills, bank-notes, and even bankers themselves. Whoever has rendered a *service*, and has not yet received the corresponding *satisfaction*, is the bearer of a warrant, either possessed of value, as money, or fiduciary, like bank-notes, which warrant gives him the power of receiving back from society, when he will, where he will, and in what form he will, an equivalent *service*. This impairs neither in principle, nor in effect, nor in an equitable point of view, the great law which I seek to elucidate, that *services are exchanged for services*. It is still the embryo barter, which has been developed, enlarged, and rendered more complex, but without losing its identity.

The bearer of such a warrant as I have just described may then demand back from society, at pleasure, either an immediate satisfaction, or an object which, in another aspect, may be regarded as capital. The person who lends or transfers has nothing to do with that. He satisfies himself as to the *equivalence of the services* —that is all.

Again, he may transfer this warrant to another, to use it as he pleases, under the double condition of *restitution*, and of a *service*, at a fixed date. If we go to the bottom of the matter, we shall find that in this case the person who lends or transfers capital *deprives himself*, in favour of the cessionary or recipient, either of an immediate satisfaction, which he defers for some years, or of an instrument of labour which would have increased his power of production, procured him the co-operation of natural agents, and augmented, to his profit, the proportion of satisfactions to efforts. He strips himself of these advantages, in order to invest another with them. This is undoubtedly to render a *service*, and in equity this service is entitled to a return. Mere restitution at the year's end cannot be considered as the remuneration of this special service. Observe that the transaction here is not a sale, where the delivery of the thing sold is immediate, and the return or remuneration is immediate also. What we have to do with here is delay. And this delay is *in itself* a special service, seeing that it imposes a sacrifice on the person who accords it, and confers an advantage on the person who asks for it. There must, then, be remuneration, or we must give up that supreme law of society, *service for service*. This remuneration is variously denominated, according to circumstances—*hire*, *rent*, yearly *income*—but its generic name is *Interest*.*

Every *service* then is, or may become, a Capital, an admirable phenomenon due to the mechanism of exchange. If workmen are to commence the construction of a railway ten years hence, we could not at the present moment store up in kind the corn which is to feed them, the stuff which is to clothe them, and the barrows and implements of which they will have need during that protracted operation. But we can save up and transmit to them the *value* of these things. For this purpose it is enough that we render present services to society, and obtain for these services the warrants, in money or credits of which I have spoken, which

* See my brochure, entitled *Capital et Rente*.

can be converted into corn or cloth ten years hence. It is not even necessary that we should leave these warrants dormant and unproductive in the interval. There are merchants, bankers, and others in society who, for the use of our services or their results, render us the service of imposing upon themselves these privations in our place.

And it is still more remarkable that we can effect an inverse operation, however impossible at first sight this may appear. We can convert into instruments of labour, into railways, into houses, a capital which as yet has no existence—thus making available at once *services* which will not be actually rendered till the twentieth century. There are bankers who are ready to make present advances on the faith that workmen and railway travellers of the third and fourth generation will provide for their payment, and these drafts upon the future are transmitted from hand to hand, without remaining for a moment unproductive. I confess I do not believe that the numerous inventors of artificial societies ever imagined anything at once so simple and so complex, so ingenious and so equitable, as this. They would at once abandon their insipid and stupid utopias if they but knew the fine harmonies of the social mechanism which has been instituted by God. It was a king of Aragon who bethought him what advice he should have given to Providence on the construction of the celestial mechanism, had he been called to the counsels of Omniscience. Newton never conceived so impious a thought.

We thus see that all transmissions of services from one point of time or of space to another repose upon this datum, that *to accord delay is to render service;* in other words, they repose on the legitimacy of Interest. The man who, in our days, has wished to suppress interest, does not see that he would bring back exchange to its embryo form,—barter, present barter,—without reference either to the future or the past. He does not see that, imagining himself the most advanced, he is in reality the most retrograde of men, since he would reconstruct society on its most primitive model. He desires, he says, *mutuality of services.* But he begins by taking away the character of *services* exactly from that kind of *services* which unite, tie together, and *solidarize* all places and all times. In spite of the practical audacity of his socialist aphorisms, he has paid an involuntary homage to the present order of things. He has but one reform, which is nega-

tive. It consists in suppressing in society the most powerful and marvellous part of its machinery.

I have explained in another place the *legitimacy* and *perpetuity* of Interest. I shall content myself at present with reminding the reader—

1*st*, That the legitimacy of interest rests upon the fact, that he who *accords delay renders service.* Interest, then, is legitimate in virtue of the principle of *service for service.*

2*d*, That the perpetuity of interest reposes on this other fact, that *he who borrows must pay back all that he has borrowed at a fixed date.* When the thing lent, or its value, is restored to its owner, he can lend it anew. When returned to him a second time, he can lend it a third time, and so on to *perpetuity.* Which of the successive and voluntary borrowers can find fault with this?

But since the legitimacy of interest has been contested so seriously in our day as to put capital to flight, or force it to conceal itself, I may be permitted to show how utterly foolish and insensate this controversy is.

And, first of all, let me ask, would it not be absurd and unjust, either that no remuneration should be given for the use of capital, or that that remuneration should be the same, whether the loan were granted and obtained at one year's, or two years', or ten years' date? If, unhappily, under this doctrine of pretended *equality*, such a law should find a place in our code, an entire category of human transactions would be suppressed on the instant. We should still have *barter*, and *sales for ready money*, but we could no longer have sales on credit, nor *loans.* The advocates of equality would relieve borrowers from the burden of paying interest; but they would, at the same time, balk them of their loans. At the same rate, we might relieve men from the inconvenient necessity of paying for what they buy. We should only have to prohibit them from purchasing; or, what would come to the same thing, declare *prices* illegal.

There is levelling enough in all conscience in this pretended principle of equality. First of all, it would put a stop to the creation of capital; for who would desire to save, when he could reap no advantage from saving? Then it would reduce wages to zero, for where there is no capital (instruments, materials, and provisions), there can be neither future work nor wages. We should very soon arrive at the most perfect of all equalities, the equality of nothingness.

But is there any man so blind as not to see that delay is *in itself* a circumstance which is *onerous*, and, consequently, entitled to remuneration? Apart, even, from the consideration of loans, would not every one endeavour to abridge delays? It is the object of our perpetual solicitude. Every employer of workmen lays great stress on the time which must elapse before his returns come in. He sells dearer or cheaper according as his returns are more or less distant. Were he indifferent on that subject, he must forget that capital is power; for if he is alive to that consideration, he must naturally desire that it should perform its work in the shortest possible time, so as to enable him the oftener to engage it in a new operation.

They are but short-sighted Economists who think that we pay interest for capital only when we borrow it. The general rule is, that he who reaps the satisfaction should bear all the charges of production, *delay included*, whether he renders the service to himself, or has it rendered to him by another. A man in a state of isolation, who has no bargains or transactions with any one, would consider it an *onerous* circumstance to be deprived of the use of his weapons for a year. Why, then, should an analogous circumstance not be considered as onerous in society? But if a man submits to it voluntarily for the sake of another who agrees voluntarily to remunerate it, what should render that remuneration illegitimate?

Nothing would be transacted in the world; no enterprise requiring advances would be undertaken; we should neither plant, nor sow, nor labour, were not delay considered as *in itself* an *onerous* circumstance, and treated and paid for as such. Universal consent is so unanimous on this point, that no exchange takes place but on this principle. Delays, hindrances, enter into the appreciation of *services*, and, consequently, into the constitution of *value*.

Thus, in their crusade against interest, the advocates of equality not only trample under foot the most obvious notions of equity —they ignore not only their own principle of *service for service*, but also the authority of mankind and universal practice. How can they, in the face of day, exhibit the overweening pride which such a pretension supposes? Is it not, indeed, a very strange and a very sad thing, that these sectaries should adopt, not only tacitly, but often in so many words, the motto, that, since the beginning of the world, all men have been mistaken except themselves. *Omnes, ego non.*

Pardon me for thus insisting on the legitimacy of interest, which is founded on this principle, that, *since delay is costly, it must be paid for*—to *cost* and to *pay* being correlative terms. The fault lies in the spirit of our age. It is quite necessary to defend vital truths, admitted generally by mankind, but attacked and brought into question by a few fanatical innovators. For a writer who aspires to demonstrate the harmony of phenomena in the aggregate, it is a painful thing, you may believe, to be constantly stopped by the necessity of elucidating the most elementary notions. Would Laplace have been able to explain the planetary system in all its simplicity, if, among his readers, there had not existed certain common and received ideas,—if it had been necessary for him, in order to prove that the earth turns upon its axis, to begin by teaching numeration? Such is the hard fate of the Economist of our day. If he neglects the rudiments, he is not understood—if he explains them, the beauty and simplicity of his system is lost sight of in the multiplicity of details.

It is a happy thing for mankind that *Interest* can be shown to be legitimate. We should otherwise be placed in a miserable dilemma—we must either perish by remaining just, or make progress by means of injustice.

Every branch of industry is an aggregate of Efforts. But, as regards efforts, there is an important distinction to be made. Some efforts are connected with services which we are presently engaged in rendering; others with an indefinite series of analogous services. Let me explain myself.

The day's work of the water-carrier must be paid for by those who profit by his labour. But his anterior labour in making his barrow and his water-cask must, as regards remuneration, be spread over an indeterminate number of consumers.

In the same way, ploughing, sowing, harrowing, weeding, cutting down, thrashing, apply only to the present harvest; but clearing, enclosing, draining, building, improving, apply to and facilitate an indefinite number of future harvests.

According to the general law of *service for service*, those who receive the ultimate satisfaction must recompense the efforts which have been made for them. As regards the first class of efforts, there is no difficulty. They are bargained for and *estimated* by the man who makes them, and the man who profits by them. But how are those of the second class to be *estimated?* How is a just proportion of the permanent advances, the general costs, and what

the Economists term fixed capital, to be spread over the whole series of satisfactions which they are destined to realize? By what process can we distribute the burden among those to whom the water is furnished down to the time when the barrow shall be worn out, and among all the consumers of corn until the period when the field will produce no more?

I know not how they would resolve this problem in Icarie, or at the Phalanstère.* But I am inclined to think that the gentlemen who manufacture artificial societies, and who are so fertile in arrangements and expedients, and so prompt to compel their adoption by Law (or constraint), could imagine no solution more ingenious than the very natural process which men have adopted since the beginning of the world, and which it is now sought to prohibit them from following. Here is the process—it flows from the law of *Interest.*

Suppose a thousand francs to be laid out on agricultural improvements, the rate of interest to be five per cent., and the average return fifty hectolitres of corn. In these circumstances, each hectolitre would be burdened with one franc.

This franc is obviously the legitimate recompense of an actual *service*, rendered by the proprietor (whom we might term a labourer), as well to the person who shall acquire a hectolitre of corn ten years hence as to the man who buys it to-day. The law of strict justice, then, is observed here.

But if the agricultural improvement, or the barrow and the water-barrel, have only a limited duration, which we can appreciate approximately, a sinking fund must be added to the interest, in order that, when these portions of capital are worn out, the proprietor may be enabled to renew them. Still it is the law of justice which governs the transaction.

We must not suppose, however, that the franc with which each hectolitre is burdened as interest is an invariable quantity. It represents a value, and is subject to the law of values. It rises or falls with the variation of supply and demand,—that is to say, according to the exigencies of the times and the interests of society.

It is generally thought that this species of remuneration has a tendency to rise, if not in the case of manufacturing, at least in the

* Allusion to Socialist works—*La Réforme industrielle, ou le Phalanstère, Recueil periodique, rédigé par Ch. Fourier*, 1832.—*Visite au Phalanstère, par M. Briancourt*, 1848.—*Voyage en Icarie, par Cabet*, 1848, &c.—TRANSLATOR.

case of agricultural improvements. Supposing this rent to have been equitable at the beginning, it has a tendency, it is said, to degenerate into abuse; because the proprietor, sitting with his hands across, sees it increase year after year, solely in consequence of the increase of population and the enlarged demand for corn.

I allow that this tendency exists, but it is not peculiar to the rent of land,—it is common to all departments of industry. In all, value increases with the density of population, and even the common day-labourer earns more in Paris than he could in Brittany.

And then, as regards the rent of land, the tendency to which we have referred is powerfully counterbalanced by another tendency—that of progress. An amelioration, realized at the present day by improved processes, effected with less manual labour, and at a time when the rate of interest has fallen, saves our paying too dearly for improvements effected in former times. The fixed capital of the landed proprietor, like that of the manufacturer, is deteriorated in the long-run by the invention of instruments of equal value and greater efficiency. This is a magnificent Law, which overturns the melancholy theory of Ricardo; and it will be explained more in detail when we come to the subject of landed property.

Observe, that the problem of the distribution of the services which form the remuneration of permanent improvements can be resolved only by a reference to the law of *interest*. The capital itself cannot be spread over a succession of purchasers, for this is rendered impossible by their indeterminate number. The first would pay for the last, which would be unjust. Besides, a time would arrive when the proprietor would become possessed both of the capital laid out in the improvement, and of the improvement itself, which would be equally unfair. Let us acknowledge, then, that the natural mechanism of society is too ingenious to require the substitution of artificial contrivances.

I have presented the phenomenon in its simplest form, in order to render it intelligible; but, in practice, things do not take place quite as I have described them.

The proprietor does not regulate the distribution himself, or determine that each hectolitre shall be charged with one franc, more or less, as in the hypothetical case which I have put. He finds an established order of things, as well with reference to the average price of corn as to the rate of interest. Upon these data he decides how he shall invest his capital. He will devote it to

agricultural improvements, if he finds that the average price of corn will return him the ordinary rate of interest. If not, he will devote his capital to a more lucrative branch of industry—a branch of industry which, just because it is more lucrative, presents, happily for society, greater attractions for capital. This movement of capital from one department to another, which is what actually takes place, tends to the same result, and presents us with another Harmony.

The reader will understand that I confine myself to a special instance only for the sake of elucidating a general law, which applies to all trades and professions.

A lawyer, for example, cannot expect, from the first suit of which he happens to have charge, to be reimbursed the expense of his education, of his course of probation, of his establishment in business, which we may suppose to amount to 20,000 francs. Not only would this be unjust—it would be impracticable; for were he to make such a stipulation, his first brief would never make its appearance, and our Cujacius would be obliged to imitate the gentleman who, on taking up house, could get nobody to come to his first ball, and declared that next year he would begin with his second.

The same thing holds with the merchant, the physician, the shipowner, the artist. In every career we encounter these two classes of efforts—the second imperatively requires to be spread over an indeterminate number of consumers, employers, or customers, and it is impossible to imagine such a distribution without reference to the mechanism of *interest*.

Great efforts have been made of late to remove the hatred which exists in the popular mind against capital,—infamous, infernal capital, as it is called. It has been exhibited to the masses as a voracious and insatiable monster, more destructive than cholera, more frightful than revolution, exercising on the body politic the action of a vampire, whose power of suction goes on increasing indefinitely. *Vires acquirit eundo.* The tongue of this blood-sucker is called usury, revenue, hire, rent, interest. A writer, who might have acquired reputation by his great powers, and who has preferred to gain notoriety by his paradoxes, has been pleased to scatter these paradoxes among a people already in the delirium of a revolutionary fever. I, too, have an apparent paradox to submit to the reader; and I beg him to examine it, and see whether it be not in reality a great and consoling truth.

But, first, I must say a word as to the manner in which M. Proudhon and his school explain what they term the illegitimacy of *interest*.

Capital is an instrument of labour. The use of instruments of labour is to procure us the co-operation of the *gratuitous* forces of nature. By the steam-engine we avail ourselves of the elasticity of air; by the watch-spring, of the elasticity of steel; by weights or waterfalls, of gravitation; by the voltaic pile, of the rapidity of the electric spark; by the sun's rays, of the chemical and physical combinations which we call vegetation, &c. &c. Now, by confounding Utility with Value, we suppose that these natural agents possess a value *which is inherent in them;* and that, consequently, those who appropriate them, are paid for their use, inasmuch as value implies payment. We imagine that products are burdened with one item for the services of man, which we admit to be just; and with another item for the services of nature, which we reject as iniquitous. Why, it is asked, should we pay for gravitation, electricity, vegetable life, elasticity, and so forth?

The answer to this question is to be found in the theory of *value*. Those Socialists who take the name of *Égalitaires* confound the legitimate *value* of the instrument, which is the offspring of human labour, with its useful result, which, under deduction of that legitimate value, or of the interest which represents it, is always gratuitous. When I remunerate an agricultural labourer, a miller, a railway company, I give nothing, absolutely nothing, for the phenomena of vegetation, gravitation, or the elasticity of steam. I pay for the human labour required for making the instruments by means of which these forces are constrained to act; or, what suits my purpose better, I pay interest for that labour. I render service for service, by means of which the useful action of these forces is turned gratuitously to my profit. It is the same thing as in the case of Exchange, or simple barter. The presence of capital does not at all modify this law, for capital is nothing else than an accumulation of values, of *services*, to which is committed the special duty of procuring the co-operation of nature.

And now for my paradox.

Of all the elements of which the total value of any product is made up, the part which we should pay for most cheerfully is that element which we term the interest of the advances, or capital.

And why? Because that element enables us, by paying for

one, to save *two*. Because, by its very presence, it shows clearly that natural forces have concurred in the final result, without our having had to pay for their co-operation; and the consequence is, that the same general utility is placed at our disposal, while at the same time a certain portion of gratuitous utility has, happily for us, been substituted for onerous utility; and, in short, the price of the product has been reduced. We acquire it with a less proportion of our own labour, and, what happens to society at large, is just what would happen to an isolated individual who should succeed in realizing an ingenious invention.

Suppose the case of a common artisan, who earns four francs a-day. With two francs,—that is to say, with half-a-day's labour, he purchases a pair of cotton stockings. Were he to try to procure these stockings by his own direct labour, I sincerely believe that his whole life would not suffice for the work. How, then, does it happen that his half-day's work pays for all the *human services* which have been rendered to him on this occasion? According to the law of *service for service*, why is he not forced to give several years' labour?

For this reason, that the stockings are the result of *human services*, of which natural agents, by the intervention of Capital, have enormously diminished the proportion. Our artisan, however, pays not only for the actual labour of all those who have concurred in the work, but also the interest of the capital by means of which the co-operation of nature was procured; and it is worthy of remark, that, without this last remuneration, or were it held to be illegitimate, capital would not have been employed to secure the assistance of the natural agents. There would have been in the product only onerous utility; for in that case the commodity would have been the exclusive result of human labour, and our artisan would have been brought back to the point whence he started,—that is to say, he would have been placed in the dilemma of either dispensing with the stockings, or of paying for them the price of several years' labour.

If our artisan had learnt to analyze phenomena, he would soon get reconciled to Capital, on seeing how much he is indebted to it. He would be convinced, above all, that the gratuitous nature of the gifts of God has been completely preserved, and that these gifts have been lavished on him with a liberality which he owes not to his own merit, but to the beautiful mechanism of the *natural* social order. Capital does not consist in the vegetative force

which has made cotton germinate and flower, but in the *pains taken* by the planter. Capital is not the wind which fills the sails of the ship, or the magnetism which acts upon the needle, but the *pains taken* by the sailmaker and the optician. Capital is not the elasticity of steam which turns the spindles of the mill, but the *pains taken* by the machine-maker. Vegetation, the power of the winds, magnetism, elasticity,—all these are purely gratuitous; and hence the stockings have so little value. As regards the pains taken by the planter, the sailmaker, the optician, the shipbuilder, the sailor, the manufacturer, the merchant, they are spread—or, rather, so far as capital is concerned, the interest of that capital is spread—over innumerable purchasers of stockings; and this is the reason why the portion of labour given by each of these purchasers is so small.

Modern reformers! when I see you desiring to replace this admirable natural order by an arrangement of your own invention, there are two things (although they are in reality one and the same) which confound me,—namely, your want of faith in Providence, and your faith in yourselves—your ignorance, and your presumption.

It follows from what I have said that the progress of mankind coincides with the rapid creation of Capital; for to say that new capital is formed, is just to say, in other words, that obstacles, formerly onerously combated by labour, are now gratuitously combated by nature; and that, be it observed, not for the profit of the capitalist, but for the profit of the community.

This being so, the paramount interest of all (in an economical point of view, and rightly understood) is to favour the rapid creation of capital. But capital, if I may say so, increases of its own accord under the triple influence of activity, frugality, and security. We can scarcely exercise any direct influence on the activity and frugality of our neighbours, except through the medium of public opinion, by an intelligent communication of our antipathies and our sympathies. But as regards security we can do much, for, without security, capital, far from being formed and accumulated, conceals itself, takes flight, and perishes; and this shows us how suicidal that popular ardour is which displays itself in disturbing the public tranquillity. Let the working-classes be well assured that the mission of Capital from the beginning has been to set men free from the yoke of ignorance, of want, and of despotism;

and that to frighten away Capital is to rivet a triple chain on the energies of the human race.

The *vires acquirit eundo* may be applied with rigorous exactitude to capital, and its beneficent influence. Capital, when formed, necessarily leaves disposable both labour and the remuneration of that labour. It carries in itself, then, a power of progression. There is in it something which resembles the law of velocities. This progression economical science has omitted hitherto to oppose to the other progression which Malthus has remarked. It is a Harmony which we cannot explain in this place, but must reserve for the chapter on Population.

But I must here put the reader on his guard against a specious objection. If the mission of capital, it may be said, is to cause nature to execute work which has been hitherto executed by human labour, whatever good it may confer upon mankind, it must do injury to the working-classes, especially to those classes who live by wages; for everything which throws hands out of employment, and renders them disposable, renders competition more intense; and this, undoubtedly, is the secret reason of the antipathy of the working-classes to men of capital. If this objection were well founded, we should have a discordant note in the social harmony.

The illusion arises from losing sight of this, that *capital, in proportion as its action is extended, sets free and renders disposable a certain amount of human efforts, only by setting free and rendering disposable a corresponding fund of remuneration*, so that these two elements meet and compensate one another. The labour is not paralyzed. Replaced in a special department of industry by gratuitous forces, it sets to work upon other obstacles in the general march of progress, and with more certainty, inasmuch as it finds its recompense prepared beforehand.

Recurring to our former illustration, it is easy to see that the price of stockings (like that of books, and all things else) is lowered by the action of capital, only by leaving in the hands of the purchaser a part of the former price. This is too clear for illustration. The workman who now pays two francs for what he paid six francs for formerly, has four francs left at his disposal. Now, it is exactly in that proportion that human labour has been replaced by natural forces. These forces, then, are a pure and simple acquisition, which alters in no respect the relation of labour to available remuneration. It will be remembered that the answer to this

objection was given formerly,* when, observing upon man in a state of isolation, or reduced once more to the primitive law of barter, I put the reader on his guard against the illusion which it is my object here to dispel.

We may leave capital, then, to take care of itself, to be created and accumulated according to its own proper tendencies, and the wants and desires of men. Do not imagine that, when the common labourer economizes for his old days, when the father of a family sets his son up in business, or provides a dower for his daughter, they are exercising to the detriment of the public that noble attribute of man, Foresight; but it would be so, and private virtues would be in direct antagonism with the general good, were there an incompatibility between Capital and Labour.

Far from mankind being subjected to this contradiction, or, I might rather say, this impossibility (for how can we conceive progressive evil in the aggregate to result from progressive good in individual cases?) we must acknowledge that Providence, in justice and mercy, has assigned a nobler part to Labour than to Capital in the work of progress, and has afforded a stimulant more efficacious, a recompense more liberal, to the man who lives by the sweat of his brow, than to the man who subsists upon the exertions of his forefathers.

In fact, having established that every increase of capital is followed by a necessary increase of general prosperity, I venture to lay down the following principle with reference to the distribution of wealth,—a principle which I believe will be found unassailable:—

"*In proportion to the increase of Capital, the* absolute *share of the total product falling to the capitalist is augmented, and his* relative *share is diminished; while, on the contrary, the labourer's share is increased both absolutely and relatively.*"

I shall explain this more clearly by figures:—

Suppose the total products of society, at successive epochs, to be represented by the figures 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, &c.

I maintain that the share falling to the capitalists will descend, successively, from 50 per cent., to 40, 35, 30 per cent., and that the share of the labourers will rise, consequently, from 50 per cent., to 60, 65, 70 per cent.,—so that the *absolute* share of the capitalist will be always greater at each period, although his *relative* share will be smaller.

* *Ante*, p. 54, *et seq.*

The division will take place in this way,—

	Total Product.	Share of Capitalist.	Share of Labourer.
First period, . . .	1000	500	500
Second period, . .	2000	800	1200
Third period, . .	3000	1050	1950
Fourth period, . .	4000	1200	2800

Such is the great, admirable, reassuring, necessary, and *inflexible* law of Capital. To demonstrate it, appears to me to be the true way to strike with discredit the declamations which have so long been dinned into our ears against the *avidity*, the *tyranny*, of the most powerful instrument of civilisation and of *equality* which has ever proceeded from the human faculties.

The demonstration is twofold. First of all, we must prove that the *relative* share of the product falling to the capitalist goes on continually diminishing. This is not difficult; for it only amounts to saying that *the more abundant capital becomes, the more interest falls.* Now, this is a matter of fact, incontestable and uncontested. Not only does science explain it—it is self-evident. Schools the most eccentric admit it. It forms the basis of their theory, for it is from this very fall of interest that they infer the necessary, the inevitable annihilation of what they choose to brand as *infernal* Capital. Now, say they, inasmuch as this annihilation is necessary, is inevitable, and must take place in a given time; and, moreover, implies the realization of a positive good, it is incumbent on us to hasten it and insure it. I am not concerned to refute these principles, or the deductions drawn from them. It is enough that Economists of all schools, as well as socialists, *egalitaires*, and others, all admit, in point of fact, that interest falls in proportion as capital becomes more abundant. Whether they admit it or not, indeed, the fact is not the less certain. It rests upon the authority of universal experience, and on the acquiescence, involuntary it may be, of all the capitalists in the world. It is a fact that the interest of capital is lower in Spain than in Mexico, in France than in Spain, in England than in France, in Holland than in England. Now, when interest falls from 20 to 15 per cent., and then to 10 to 8, to 6, to 5, to 4½, to 4, to 3½, to 3 per cent., what does that mean in relation to the question which now engages us? It means that capital, as the recompense of its co-operation in the work of production, in the realization of wealth, is content, or, if you will, is forced to be content, with a smaller and smaller share

of the product in proportion as capital increases. Does it constitute one-third of the value of corn, of cloth, of houses, of ships, of canals? in other words, when these things are sold, does one-third of the price fall to the capitalist, and two-thirds to the labourer? By degrees, the capitalist receives no more than a fourth, a fifth, a sixth. His *relative* share goes on diminishing, while that of the labourer goes on increasing in the same proportion; and the first part of my demonstration is complete.

It remains for me to prove that the *absolute* share falling to the capitalist goes on constantly increasing. It is very true that the tendency of interest is to fall. But when, and why? When, and because, the capital becomes more abundant. It is then quite possible that the total product should be increased while the *per-centage* is diminished. A man has a larger income with 200,000 francs at four per cent., than with 100,000 francs at five per cent., although, in the first case, he charges less to the manufacturer for the use of his capital. The same thing holds of a nation, and of the world at large. Now, I maintain that the *per-centage*, in its tendency to fall, neither does nor can follow a progression so rapid that the *sum total* of interest should be smaller when capital is abundant than when it is scarce. I admit, indeed, that if the capital of mankind be represented by 100 and interest by 5,—this interest will amount to no more than 4 when the capital shall have mounted to 200. Here we see the simultaneousness of the two effects. The less the *relative* part, the greater the *absolute* part. But my hypothesis does not admit that the increase of capital from 100 to 200 is sufficient to make interest fall from 5 to 2 per cent., for example; because, if it were so, the capitalist who had an income of 5000 francs with 100,000 francs of capital, would have no greater income than 4000 francs with 200,000 francs of capital. A result so contradictory and imposible, an anomaly so strange, would be met with the simplest and most agreeable of remedies; for then, in order to increase your income, it would only be necessary to consume half your capital. A happy and whimsical age it would be when men could enrich by impoverishing themselves!

We must take care, then, not to lose sight of the combination of these two correlative facts. The increase of capital, and the fall of interest, take place *necessarily* in such a way that the total product is continually augmented.

And let us remark in passing, that this completely exposes the

fallacy of those who imagine that because interest falls, it tends to annihilation. The effect of that would be, that a time would arrive when capital would be so much increased as to yield nothing to its possessors. Keep your mind easy on that score—before that time comes, capitalists will dissipate the stock in order to ensure the reappearance of interest.

Such is the great law of Capital and Labour in what concerns the distribution of the product of their joint agency. Each of them has a greater and greater *absolute* share, but the *proportional* share of the capitalist is continually diminished as compared with that of the labourers.

Cease, then, capitalists and workmen, to regard each other with an eye of envy and distrust. Shut your ears against those absurd declamations which proceed from ignorance and presumption, which, under pretence of insuring future prosperity, blow the flame of present discord. Be assured that your interests are one and identical; that they are indisputably knit together; that they tend together towards the realization of the public good; that the toils of the present generation mingle with the labours of generations which are past; that all who co-operate in the work of production receive their share of the produce; and that the most ingenious and most equitable distribution is effected among you by the wise laws of Providence, and under the empire of freedom, independently altogether of a parasite sentimentalism, which would impose upon you its decrees at the expense of your well-being, your liberty, your security, and your self-respect.

Capital has its root in these attributes of man—Foresight, Intelligence, and Frugality. To set about the creation of capital we must look forward to the future, and sacrifice the present to it—we must exercise a noble empire over ourselves and over our appetites; we must resist the seduction of present enjoyments, the impulses of vanity and the caprices of fashion and of public opinion, always so indulgent to the thoughtless and the prodigal. We must study cause and effect, in order to discover by what processes, by what instruments, nature can be made to co-operate in the work of production. We must be animated by love for our families, and not grudge present sacrifices for the sake of those who are dear to us, and who will reap the fruits after we ourselves have disappeared from the scene. To create capital is to prepare food, clothing, shelter, leisure, instruction, independence, dignity, for future generations. Nothing of all this can be

effected without bringing into play motives which are eminently social, and, what is more, converting these virtues into habits.

And yet it is very usual to attribute to capital a sort of fatal efficacy, the effect of which is to introduce egotism, austerity, Machiavelism, into the hearts of those who aspire to possess it. But let us not be misunderstood. There are countries where labour is of little value, and the little that is earned is shared by the government. In order to snatch from you the fruit of your toil, what is called the State surrounds you with a multitude of trammels. It interferes with all your actions, and mixes itself up in all your concerns. It domineers over your mind and your faith. It disarranges all interests, and places them in an artificial and precarious position. It enervates individual energy and activity, by usurping the direction of all affairs. It makes the responsibility of actions fall upon people with whom it amounts to nothing, so that by degrees all notions of what is just or unjust are effaced. By its diplomacy it embroils the nation in quarrels with all the world, and then the army and navy are brought into play. It warps the popular mind as much as it can upon all economical questions; for it is necessary to make the masses believe that its foolish expenditure, its unjust aggressions, its conquests, its colonies, are for them a source of riches. In such countries it is difficult to create capital by natural means. The great object is to purloin it by force or by fraud from those who have created it. We there see men enriching themselves by war, by places at court, by gambling, by purveying, by stock-jobbing, by commercial frauds, by hazardous enterprises, by public contracts, &c. The qualities requisite for thus snatching capital from the hands of those who create it are precisely the opposite of those necessary for its formation. It cannot surprise us, then, that in countries so situated an association is established between these two ideas—*capital* and *egotism;* and this association becomes ineradicable when all the moral ideas of the country exhaust themselves on ancient and mediæval history.

But when we turn our regards, not to this abstraction and abuse of capital, but to its creation by intelligence and activity, foresight and frugality, it is impossible not to perceive that a moral and social virtue is attached to its acquisition.

Nor is there less moral and social virtue in the action of capital than in its formation. Its peculiar effect is to procure us the co-operation of nature, to set us free from all that is most material,

muscular, brutal, in the work of production; to render the intelligent principle more and more predominant; to enlarge the domain, I do not say of idleness, but of leisure; to render less imperious the physical wants of our nature, by rendering their satisfaction more easy, and to substitute for them wants and enjoyments of a nature more elevated, more delicate, more refined, more artistic, more spiritual.

Thus, in whatever point of view we place ourselves, whether we regard Capital in connexion with our wants, which it ennobles; with our efforts, which it facilitates; with our enjoyments, which it purifies; with nature, which it enlists in our service; with morality, which it converts into habit; with sociability, which it develops; with equality, which it promotes; with freedom, in which it lives; with equity, which it realizes by methods the most ingenious—everywhere, always, provided that it is created and acts in the regular order of things, and is not diverted from its natural uses, we recognise in Capital what forms the indubitable note and stamp of all great providential laws,—Harmony.

VIII.

PROPERTY—COMMUNITY.

Recognising in the soil, in natural agents, and in instruments of labour, what they incontestably possess, the gift of engendering Utility, I have endeavoured to denude them of what has been erroneously attributed to them, namely, the faculty of creating Value,—a faculty which pertains exclusively to the Services which men exchange with each other.

This simple rectification, whilst it strengthens and confirms Property, by restoring to it its true character, brings to light a most important fact, hitherto, if I am not mistaken, overlooked by Economic science—the fact that there exists a real, essential, and *progressive* Community,—the natural result of every social system in which liberty prevails, and the evident design of which is to conduct all men, as brethren, from primitive Equality, which is the equality of ignorance and destitution, towards an ultimate Equality in the possession of truth and material prosperity.

If this radical distinction between the Utility of things and the value of services be true in itself, and in the consequences which have been deduced from it, it is impossible to misunderstand its bearing; for it leads to nothing less than the absorption of utopian theories in science, and the reconcilement of antagonistic schools in a common faith, which satisfies all minds and all aspirations.

Men of property and leisure!—whatever be your rank in the social scale, whatever step of the social ladder you may have reached by dint of activity, probity, order, and economy—whence come the fears which have seized upon you? The perfumed but poisoned breath of Utopia menaces your existence. You are loudly told that the fortune you have amassed for the purpose of securing a little repose in your old age, and food, instruction, and an outset in life for your children, has been acquired by you at the expense of your brethren; that you have placed yourselves

between the gifts of God and the poor; that, like greedy tax-gatherers, you have levied a tribute on those gifts, under the name of Property, of Interest, and of Rent; that you have intercepted the benefits which the common Father has bestowed on his children, in order to make merchandise of them. You are called upon for restitution; and what augments your terror is, that your advocates, in conducting your defence, feel themselves too often obliged to avow that the usurpation is flagrant, but that it is necessary. Such accusations I meet with a direct and emphatic negative. You have not intercepted the gifts of God. You have received them gratuitously, it is true, at the hands of nature; but you have also gratuitously transferred them to your brethren without receiving anything. They have acted the same way towards you; and the only things which have been reciprocally *compensated* are physical or intellectual efforts, toils undergone, dangers braved, skill exercised, privations submitted to, pains taken, *services rendered and received.* You may perhaps have thought only of yourselves and your own selfish interest, but that very selfish interest has been an instrument in the hand of an infinitely prescient and wise Providence to enlarge unceasingly among men the domain of Community; for without your efforts all those *useful effects* which you have obtained from nature, in order to distribute them without remuneration among your brethren, would have remained for ever inert. I say *without remuneration*, because what you have received is simply the recompense of your efforts, and not at all the price of the gifts of God. Live, then, in peace, without fear and without misgiving. You have no other property in the world but your right to services, in exchange for other services, by you faithfully rendered, and by your brethren voluntarily accepted. Such property is legitimate, unassailable; no Utopia can prevail against it, for it enters into the very constitution of our being. No theory can ever succeed in blighting or in shaking it.

Men of toil and privations! you cannot shut your eyes to this truth, that the primitive condition of the human race is that of an entire Community,—a perfect Equality,—of poverty, of destitution, and of ignorance. Man redeems himself from this estate by the sweat of his brow, and directs his course towards another Community, that of the gifts of God, successively obtained with less effort,—towards another Equality, that of material prosperity, knowledge, and moral dignity. The progress of men on the road of improvement is unequal indeed; and you could not complain

were the more hurried and precipitate march of the vanguard of progress to retard in some measure your own advance. But in truth it is quite the reverse. No ray of light penetrates a single mind without in some degree enlightening yours. No step of progress, prompted by the conscious possession of property, but is a step of progress for you. No wealth is created which does not tend to your enfranchisement; no capital, which does not increase your enjoyments in proportion to your labour; no acquisition, which does not increase your facilities of acquisition; no Property, which does not tend to enlarge, for your benefit, the domain of Community. The natural social order has been so skilfully arranged by the Divine Architect, that those who are more advanced on the road of civilisation hold out to you, voluntarily or unconsciously, a helping hand; for the order of things has been so disposed that no man can work honestly for himself without at the same time working for all. And it is rigorously true to affirm that every attack upon this marvellous order would on your part be not only a homicide, but a suicide. Human nature is an admirable chain, which exhibits this standing miracle, that the first links communicate to all the others a progressive movement more and more rapid, onwards to the last.

Men of philanthropy! lovers of equality! blind defenders, dangerous friends, of the suffering classes, who are yet far behind on the road of civilisation, you who expect the reign of Community in this world, why do you begin by unsettling all interests and shaking all received opinions? Why, in your pride, should you seek to subjugate men's wills, and bring them under the yoke of your social inventions? Do you not see that this Community after which you sigh, and which is to inaugurate the kingdom of God upon earth, has been already thought of and provided for by God himself? Does He want your aid to provide a patrimony for his children? Has He need either of your conceptions or of your violence? Do you not see that this Community is realized more and more every day, in virtue of His admirable decrees; that for the execution of these decrees He has not trusted to your chance services and puerile arrangements, nor even to the growing expression of the sympathetic principle manifested by charity; but that He has confided the realization of His providential designs to the most active, the most personal, the most permanent of all our energies,—Self-interest,—a principle imbedded in our inmost nature, and which never flags, never takes rest?

Study, then, the social mechanism as it comes from the hand of the Great Mechanician, and you will find that it testifies to a universal solicitude, which far outstrips your dreams and chimeras. You will then, I hope, in place of presumptuously pretending to reconstruct the divine workmanship, be content to admire and to bless it.

I say not that there is no room in this world of ours for reforms and reformers. I say not that mankind are not to call to their service, and encourage with their gratitude, men of investigation, of science, and of earnestness,—hearts faithful to the people. Such are still but too much wanted,—not to overturn the social laws,—but to combat the artificial obstacles which disturb and reverse the action of these laws. In truth, it is difficult to understand why people should keep repeating such commonplaces as this: "Political Economy is an optimist, as far as existing facts are concerned; and affirms that whatever is is right. At the sight of what is evil, as at the sight of what is good, Economists are content to exclaim, *Laissez faire.*" Optimists with reference to existing facts! Then we must be ignorant that the primitive condition of man is poverty, ignorance, the reign of brute force! We must be ignorant that the moving spring of human nature is aversion to all suffering, to all fatigue; and that labour being fatigue, the earliest manifestation of selfishness among men is shown in their effort to throw this painful burden on the shoulders of each other! The words cannibalism, war, slavery, privilege, monopoly, fraud, spoliation, imposture, must either have never reached our ears, or else we must see in these abominations the necessary machinery of progress! But is there not in all this a certain amount of wilful misrepresentation, a confounding of all things for the purpose of accusing us of confounding them? When we admire the providential laws which govern human transactions—when we assert that men's interests are harmonious—when we thence conclude that they naturally tend and gravitate towards the realization of relative equality and general progress—it is surely from the play and action of these laws, not from their perturbations and disturbances, that we educe harmony. When we say *laissez faire*, we surely mean, *allow these laws to act*, not, *allow these laws to be disturbed.* According as we conform to these laws or violate them, good or evil is produced; in other words, men's interests are in harmony, provided right prevail, and services are freely and voluntarily exchanged

against services. But does this imply that we are ignorant of the perpetual struggle of Wrong against Right? Does this imply that we lose sight of, or approve, the efforts which have been made in all ages, and which are still making, to alter, by force or fraud, the natural equivalence of services? This is exactly what we repudiate as a violation of the natural social laws, as an attack upon property,—for, in our view, the terms, free exchange of services, justice, property, liberty, security, all express the same idea under different aspects. It is not the principle of Property which we contest, but the antagonistic principle of Spoliation. Proprietors of all ranks! reformers of all schools! this is the mission which should reconcile and unite us.

It is time, high time, that this crusade should begin. A mere theoretical war against Property is by no means the most virulent or the most dangerous. Since the beginning of the world there has existed a practical conspiracy against it which is not likely soon to cease. War, slavery, imposture, oppressive imposts, monopolies, privileges, commercial frauds, colonies, right to employment, right to credit, right to assistance, right to instruction, progressive taxation imposed in direct or inverse proportion to our power of bearing it, are so many battering-rams directed against the tottering edifice; and if the truth must come out, would you tell me whether there are many men in France, even among those who think themselves conservative, who do not, in one form or another, lend a hand to this work of destruction?

There are people to whose optics property never appears in any other form than that of a field or a bag of crown-pieces. If you do not overstep sacred landmarks, or sensibly empty their pockets, they feel quite comfortable. But is there no other kind of Property? Is there not the Property of muscular force and intellectual power, of faculties, of ideas—in a word, the Property of Services? When I throw a service into the social scale, is it not my right that it should be held there, if I may use the expression, suspended, according to the laws of its natural equivalence; that it may there form a counterpoise to any other service which my neighbour may consent to throw into the opposite scale and tender me in exchange? The law of common consent agreed to establish a public force for the protection of property thus understood. But in what situation are we placed if this very force assumes to itself the mission of disturbing the equilibrium, under the socialist pretext that liberty gives birth to monopoly, and that the doctrine of

laissez faire is odious and heartless? When things go on in this way, individual theft may be rare, and may be severely punished, but spoliation is organized, legalized, and erected into a system. Comfort yourselves, Reformers! your work is not yet done—only try to understand what that work really is.

But before proceeding to analyze spoliation, whether public or private, legal or illegal, and to consider its bearing as an element in the social problem, and the part which it plays in the business of the world, it is necessary to form just ideas, if possible, of Community and Property; for, as we shall by and by see, spoliation forms a limit to property, just as property forms a limit to community.

From the preceding Chapters, especially that which treats of Utility and Value, we may deduce this formula:

Every man enjoys GRATUITOUSLY *all the utilities furnished or created by nature, on condition of taking the trouble to appropriate them, or of returning an equivalent service to those who render him the service of taking that trouble for him.*

Here we have two facts combined and mixed up together, although in their own nature distinct.

We have the gifts of nature—gratuitous materials, gratuitous forces. This is the domain of *Community.*

We have also human efforts devoted to the appropriation of these materials, to the direction of these forces,—efforts which are exchanged, *estimated,* and compensated. This is the domain of *Property.*

In other words, as regards both, we are not owners of the Utility of things, but of their Value, and value is simply the appreciation of reciprocal services.

Property, Community, are two ideas correlative to the ideas of *onerosity* and *gratuitousness,* on which they are founded.

That which is *gratuitous* is *common,* for every one enjoys a portion of it, and enjoys it unconditionally.

That which is *onerous* is *appropriated,* because trouble taken, effort made, is the condition of its enjoyment, as the enjoyment is the reason for taking the trouble, or making the effort.

Does an exchange intervene? It is effected by a comparative estimate of the two efforts or the two services.

This reference to trouble, to pains, implies the existence of an Obstacle. We may then conclude that the object sought for ap-

proximates more nearly to the gratuitous and the common, in proportion as the obstacle is less; as, by hypothesis, the complete absence of obstacle would render it perfectly gratuitous and common.

Now, with reference to human nature, which is progressive and perfectible, the obstacle can never be regarded as an absolute and invariable quantity. It diminishes. Then the pains taken diminish along with it—and the service with the pains—and value with the service—and property with value.

And the Utility remains the same. Then the gratuitous and the common have gained all that onerosity and property have lost.

To determine man to labour he must have a motive, and that motive is the satisfaction he has in view, or utility. His undoubted and irrepressible tendency is to realize the greatest possible satisfaction with the least possible labour, to cause the greatest amount of utility to correspond with the greatest amount of property. Whence it follows that the mission of Property, or rather of the spirit of property, is to realize, in a greater and greater degree, Community.

The starting point of the human race being the maximum of poverty, or the maximum of obstacles to be overcome, it is clear that for all that is gained from one age to another we are indebted to the spirit of property.

This being so, is there to be found in the world a single theoretical adversary of the institution of property? Is it possible to imagine a social force at once so just and so popular? The fundamental dogma of Proudhon himself is the *mutuality of services.* On this point we are agreed. What we differ upon is, that I give this the name of *Property,* because, on going to the root of the matter, I am convinced that men, if they are free, neither have, nor can have, any other property than that of value, or of services. On the contrary, Proudhon, like most Economists, thinks that certain natural agents have *a value which is inherent in them,* and that in consequence of that they are *appropriated.* But as regards property in services, far from contesting it, he adopts it as his creed. Do you wish to go still farther? to go the length of asserting that a man should not have a right of property in his own exertions? Will it be said that by exchange it is not enough to transfer gratuitously the co-operation of natural agents, but also to cede gratuitously one's own efforts? This is indeed a dangerous doctrine; it is to glorify slavery; for to assert that certain

men must render, is to assert that other men must receive, services which are not remunerated, and that is slavery. But if you say that this gratuitous interchange must be reciprocal, you get into an incomprehensible logomachy; for either there is some equity in exchange, and then the services will, in one way or another, be *estimated* and compensated; or they will not be estimated and compensated,—in which case the one party will render a great amount of service, and the other a small amount, and you will fall back again into slavery.

But it is impossible to contest the legitimate nature of Property in services which are exchanged on the principle of equivalence. To explain their legitimacy we have no need to have recourse to philosophy, or jurisprudence, or metaphysics. Socialists, Economists, Advocates of Equality and Fraternity,—I defy the whole body, numerous as it is, to raise even the shadow of an objection against the *legitimate mutuality of voluntary services*, and consequently against Property, such as I have defined it, such as it actually exists in the natural social order.

I know very well that in practice the reign of Property is far from being an undivided sway, and that we have always to deal with an antagonistic fact. There are services which are not voluntary; there is remuneration which is not freely stipulated; there are services whose equivalence is impaired by force or by fraud; in a word, there is Spoliation. The legitimate principle of Property, however, is not thereby invalidated but confirmed. The very fact of its being violated proves its existence. If we put faith in anything in this world—in facts, in justice, in universal assent, in human language—we must admit that these two words, Property and Spoliation, express ideas which are as opposite, as irreconcilable, as far from being identical as yes and no, light and darkness, good and evil, harmony and discord. Taken literally, the celebrated formula that *property is theft* is absurd in the very highest degree. It would not be more monstrous to say that *theft is property*, that what is legitimate is illegitimate, that what is is not, &c. The author of this whimsical aphorism probably wished to show how ingeniously he could support a paradox, and meant no more than this, that certain men are paid not only for work which they do but for work which they don't do, thus appropriating to themselves, exclusively, gratuitous utility—the gifts vouchsafed by God for the good of all. In this case all that we have to do is to prove the assertion, and substitute the truism that *theft is theft*.

To *steal* means, in ordinary language, to appropriate, by force or fraud, a value, to the prejudice and without the consent of the person who has created that value. It is easy to see how a false Political Economy has succeeded in enlarging the sense of that ugly word *steal*. You begin by confounding utility with value. Then, as nature co-operates in the creation of utility, you conclude that nature also concurs in the creation of value, and you say that this portion of value, being the fruit of no one's labour, belongs to all. At length, finding that value is never transferred without remuneration, you add, that the man who exacts a recompense for a value which is the creation of nature, which is independent of all human labour, which is *inherent in things*, and is by the destination of Providence one of their *intrinsic qualities*, like weight or porosity, form or colour, *commits a robbery*.

An exact analysis of value overturns this scaffolding of subtilties intended to prop up a monstrous assimilation of Property with Spoliation.

God has placed certain Materials and certain Forces at the disposal of man. In order to obtain possession of these materials and forces, Labour is necessary, or it is not. If it be not necessary, no one will voluntarily consent to purchase from another, by means of an effort, what, without any effort, he can obtain from the hands of Nature. In this case, services, exchange, value, *Property*, are out of the question. If, on the other hand, labour be necessary, in equity it falls upon the person who is to receive the satisfaction; whence it follows that the satisfaction is the recompense of the pains taken, the effort made, the labour undergone. Here you have the principle of Property. This being so, a man takes pains, or submits to labour, for his own benefit, and becomes possessed of the whole utility realized by this labour co-operating with nature. He takes pains, or submits to labour, for another, and in that case he bargains to receive in return an equivalent service, which is likewise the vehicle of utility, and the result exhibits two Efforts, two Utilities which have changed hands, and two Satisfactions. But we must not lose sight of this, that the transaction is effected by the comparison, by the *appreciation*, not of the two utilities (they cannot be brought to this test), but of the two services exchanged. It is then exact to say that, in a personal point of view, man, by means of labour, becomes proprietor of natural utility (that is the object of his labour), whatever be the relation (which may vary *ad infinitum*) of labour to utility. But in a *social* point

of view, or in reference to each other, men are never proprietors except of value, the foundation of which is not the liberality of nature, but human service, pains taken, danger encountered, skill displayed, in securing that liberality. In a word, in what concerns natural and gratuitous utility, the last acquirer, the person who is the recipient of the satisfaction, is placed, by exchange, in the shoes of the first labourer. The latter has found himself in presence of a gratuitous utility which he has taken the pains to appropriate; the former returns him an equivalent service, and thus substitutes himself in the other's right and place; utility is acquired by him by the same title, that is to say, by a gratuitous title, on condition of pains taken. There is here, neither in fact nor in appearance, any improper interception of the gifts of God.

I venture, then, to lay down this proposition as unassailable:

In relation to one another, men are proprietors only of values, and values represent only services compared, and voluntarily received and rendered.

That, on the one hand, the true meaning of the word *value* is what I have already demonstrated it to be (Chapter V.); and that, on the other, men are never, and never can be, as regards each other, proprietors of anything but *value*, is evident as well from reasoning as from experience. From reasoning—for why should I go to purchase from a man, by means of an effort, what, without any effort, I can obtain from nature? From universal experience, which is too weighty to be despised in this question,—nothing being more fitted to give us confidence in a theory than the rational and practical acquiescence of men of all ages and all countries. Now I say that universal consent ratifies the sense which I give here to the word Property. When a public officer makes an inventory after a death, or by authority of justice, or when a merchant, manufacturer, or farmer does the same thing for his own satisfaction, or when it is done by officials under a bankruptcy—what do they inscribe on the stamped rolls as each object presents itself? Is it its *utility*, its intrinsic merit? No, it is its *value*, that is to say, the equivalent of the trouble which any purchaser taken at random would have in procuring himself a similar commodity. Does a jury named by a judge to report upon a work or a commodity inquire whether it be more useful than another work or commodity? Do they take into consideration the enjoyments which may be thereby procured? Do they esteem a hammer more than a china jar, because the hammer is admirably adapted to make the

law of gravitation available to its possessor? or a glass of water more than a diamond, because the former is capable of rendering more substantial service? or the work of Say more than the work of Fourier, because from the former we can draw more rational enjoyment and more solid instruction? No, they *value*, they set down the *value*, in rigorous conformity, observe, with my definition, or, to say better, it is my definition which is in conformity with their practice. They take into account, not the natural advantages, or the gratuitous utility, attached to each commodity, but the exertion which each acquirer should have to make for himself, or to require another to make for him, in order to procure it. They never think of the exertion which nature has made, if I may hazard the expression, but upon the exertion which the purchaser would have had to make. And when the operation is terminated, when the public is told the sum total of Value which is carried to the balance-sheet, they exclaim with one voice, Here is the wealth which is available to the PROPRIETOR.

As property includes nothing but value, and as value expresses only a relation, it follows that property itself is only a relation.

When the public, on the inspection of two inventories, pronounces one man to be richer than another, it is not meant to say that the relative amount of the two propertics is indicative of the relative absolute wealth of the two men, or the amount of enjoyments they can command. There enters into positive satisfactions and enjoyments a certain amount of *common and gratuitous utility* which alters this proportion very much. As regards the light of day, the air we breathe, the heat of the sun, all men are equal; and Inequality—as indicative of a difference in property or value —has reference only to *onerous utility*.

Now I have often said, and I shall probably have occasion frequently to repeat the remark (for it is the finest and most striking, although perhaps the least understood, of the social harmonies, and includes all the others), that it is of the essence of progress—and indeed in this alone progress consists—to transform onerous into gratuitous utility—to diminish value without diminishing utility—to permit each individual to procure the same things with less effort, either to make or to remunerate; to increase continually the mass of things which are *common*, and the enjoyment of which, being distributed in a uniform manner among all, effaces by degrees the Inequality which results from difference of fortune.

We must not omit to analyze very carefully the result of this mechanism.

In contemplating the phenomena of the social world, how often have I had occasion to feel the profound justice of Rousseau's saying: "Il faut beaucoup de philosophie pour observer ce qu'on voit tous les jours!" It is difficult to observe accurately what we see every day; *Custom*, that veil which blinds the eyes of the vulgar, and which the attentive observer cannot always throw off, prevents our discerning the most marvellous of all the Economic phenomena: real wealth falling incessantly from the domain of Property into that of Community.

Let us endeavour to demonstrate and explain this democratic evolution, and, if possible, test its range and its effects.

I have remarked elsewhere that if we desire to compare two epochs as regards real wealth and prosperity, we must refer all to a common standard, which is unskilled labour measured by time, and ask ourselves this question—What difference in the amount of satisfaction, according to the degree of advancement which society has reached, is a determinate quantity of unskilled labour—for example, a day's work of a common labourer—capable of yielding us?

This question implies two others:

What was the relation of the satisfaction to unskilled labour at the beginning of the period? What is it now?

The difference will be the measure of the advance which gratuitous utility has made relatively to onerous utility,—the domain of community relatively to that of property.

I believe that for the politician no problem can be proposed more interesting and instructive than this; and the reader must pardon me if, in order to arrive at a satisfactory solution of it, I fatigue him with too many examples.

I made, at the outset, a sort of catalogue of the most common human wants: respiration, food, clothing, lodging, locomotion, instruction, amusement, &c.

Let us resume the same order, and inquire what amount of satisfactions a common day-labourer could at the beginning, and can now, procure himself, by a determinate number of days' labour.

Respiration.—Here all is completely gratuitous and common from the beginning. Nature does all, and leaves us nothing to do. Efforts, services, value, property, progress, are all out of the question. As regards utility, Diogenes is as rich as Alexander—as regards value, Alexander is as rich as Diogenes.

Food.—At present, the value of a hectolitre of corn in France is the equivalent of from 15 to 20 days' work of a common unskilled labourer. This is a fact which we may regard as unimportant, but it is not the less worthy of remark. It is a fact that in our day, viewing humanity in its least advanced aspect, and as represented by a penniless workman, enjoyment measured by a hectolitre of corn can be obtained by an expenditure of 15 days' unskilled labour. The ordinary calculation is, that three hectolitres of corn annually are required for the subsistence of one man. The common labourer, then, produces, if not his subsistence, what comes to the same thing, the value of his subsistence by an expenditure of from 45 to 60 days' labour in the year. If we represent the type of value by *one* (in this case *one day's unskilled labour*), the value of a hectolitre of corn will be expressed by 15, 18, or 20, according to the year. The relation of these two values is, say, *one to fifteen.*

To discover if progress has been made, and to measure it, we must inquire what this relation was in the early days of the human race. In truth, I dare not hazard a figure, but there is one way of clearing up the difficulty. When you hear a man declaiming against the social order, against the appropriation of the soil, against rent, against machinery, lead him into the middle of a primitive forest and in sight of a pestilential morass. Say to him, I wish to free you from the yoke of which you complain,—I wish to withdraw you from the atrocious struggles of anarchical competition, from the antagonism of interests, from the selfishness of wealth, from the oppression of property, from the crushing rivalry of machinery, from the stifling atmosphere of society. Here is land exactly like what the first clearers had to encounter. Take as much of it as you please—take it by tens, by hundreds of acres. Cultivate it yourself. All that you can make it produce is yours. I make but one condition, that you will not have recourse to that society of which you represent yourself as the victim.

As regards the soil, observe, this man would be placed in exactly the same situation which mankind at large occupied at the beginning. Now I fear not to be contradicted when I assert, that this man would not produce a hectolitre of corn in two years: Ratio 15 to 600.

And now we can measure the progress which has been made. As regards corn—and despite his being obliged to pay rent for his

land, interest for his capital, and hire for his tools—or rather because he pays them—a labourer now obtains with 15 days' work what he would formerly have had difficulty in procuring with 600 days' work. The value of corn, then, measured by unskilled labour, has fallen from 600 to 15, or from 40 to 1. A hectolitre of corn has for man the same utility it had the day after the deluge—it contains the same quantity of alimentary substance—it satisfies the same want, and in the same degree. It constitutes an equal amount of *real wealth*—it does not constitute an equal amount of *relative wealth*. Its production has been transferred in a great measure *to the charge of nature*. It is obtained with *less* human *effort*. It renders *less service* in passing from hand to hand, it has less *value*. In a word, it has become *gratuitous*, not absolutely, but in the proportion of 40 to 1.

And not only has it become *gratuitous*—it has become *common* to the same extent. For it is not to the profit of the person who produces the corn that 39-40ths of the effort have been annihilated, but to the advantage of the consumer, whatever be the kind of labour to which he devotes himself.

Clothing.—We have here again the same phenomenon. A common day-labourer enters one of the warehouses at the Marais,* and there obtains clothing corresponding to twenty days of his labour, which we suppose to be unskilled. Were he to attempt to make this clothing himself, his whole life would be insufficient. Had he desired to obtain the same clothing in the time of Henri Quatre, it would have cost him three or four hundred days' work. What then has become of this difference in the *value* of these stuffs in relation to the quantity of unskilled labour? It has been annihilated, because the *gratuitous* forces of nature now perform a great portion of the work, and it has been annihilated to the advantage of mankind at large.

For we must not fail to remark here, that every man owes his neighbour a service equivalent to what he has received from him. If, then, the art of the weaver had made no progress, if weaving were not executed in part by *gratuitous* forces, the weaver would still be occupied two or three hundred days in fabricating these stuffs, and our workmen would require to give him two or three hundred days' work in order to obtain the clothing he wants. And since the weaver cannot succeed, with all his wish to do so,

* Public warehouses where goods were deposited, and negotiable receipts issued in exchange for them.—TRANSLATOR.

in obtaining two or three hundred days' labour in recompense for the intervention of gratuitous forces, and for the progress achieved, we are warranted in saying that this progress has been effected to the advantage of the purchaser or consumer, and that it is a gain to society at large.

Conveyance.—Prior to all progress, when the human race, like our day-labourer, was obliged to make use of primitive and unskilled labour, if a man had desired to have a load of a hundredweight transported from Paris to Bayonne, he would have had only this alternatve, either to take the load on his own shoulders, and perform the work himself, travelling over hill and dale, which would have required a year's labour, or else to ask some one to perform this rough piece of work for him; and as, by hypothesis, the person who undertook this work would have to employ the same means and the same time, he would undoubtedly demand a remuneration equal to a year's labour. At that period, then, the value of unskilled labour being *one*, that of transport was 300 for the weight of a cwt. and a distance of 200 leagues.

But things are changed now. In fact there is no workman in Paris who cannot obtain the same result by the sacrifice of two days' labour. The alternative indeed is still the same. He must either do the work himself, or get others to do it for him, by remunerating them. If our day-labourer perform it himself, it will still cost him a year of fatigue; but if he applies to men who make it their business, he will find twenty carriers to do what he wants for three or four francs, that is to say, for the equivalent of two days' unskilled labour. Thus the value of such labour being represented by *one*, that of transport, which was represented by 300, is now reduced to *two*.

In what way has this astonishing revolution been brought about? Ages have been required to accomplish it. Animals have been trained, mountains have been pierced, valleys have been filled up, bridges have been thrown across rivers, sledges and afterwards wheeled carriages have been invented, obstacles, which give rise to labour, services, value, have been removed; in short, we have succeeded in accomplishing, with labour equal to two, what our remote ancestors would have effected only by labour equal to 300. This progress has been realized by men who had no thought but for their own interests. And yet, who profits by it now? Our poor day-labourer, and with him society at large.

Let no one say that this is not Community. I say that it is

Community in the strictest sense of the word. At the outset the satisfaction in question was, in the estimation of all, the equivalent of 300 days' unskilled labour, or a proportionally smaller amount of skilled labour. Now 298 parts of this labour out of 300 are performed by nature, and mankind are exonerated to a corresponding extent. Now, evidently all men are in exactly the same situation as regards the obstacles which have been removed, the distance which has been wiped out, the fatigue which has been obviated, the value which has been annihilated, since all obtain the result without having to pay for it. What they pay for is the human effort which remains still to be made, as compared with and measured by two days' work of an unskilled labourer. In other words, the man who has not himself effected this improvement, and who has only muscular force to offer in exchange, has still to give two days' labour to secure the satisfaction he wishes to obtain. All other men can obtain it with a smaller sacrifice of labour. The Paris lawyer, earning 30,000 francs a-year, can obtain it for a twenty-fifth part of a day's labour, &c.,—by which we see that all men are equal as regards the value annihilated, and that the inequality is restrained within the limits of the portion of value which survives the change, that is, within the domain of Property.

Economical science labours under a disadvantage in being obliged to have recourse to hypothetical cases. The reader is taught to believe that the phenomena which we wish to describe are to be discovered only in special cases, adduced for the sake of illustration. But it is evident that what we have said of corn, clothing, and means of transport, is true of everything else. When an author generalizes, it is for the reader to particularize; and when the former devotes himself to cold and forbidding analysis, the latter may at least indulge in the pleasures of synthesis.

The synthetic law may be reduced to this formula:

Value, which is social property, springs from Effort and Obstacle.

In proportion as the obstacle is lessened, effort, value, or the domain of property, is diminished along with it.

With reference to each given satisfaction, Property always recedes and Community always advances.

Must we then conclude with M. Proudhon that the days of Property are numbered? Because, as regards each useful result to be realized, each satisfaction to be obtained, Property recedes before Community, are we thence to conclude that the former is about to be absorbed and annihilated altogether?

To adopt this conclusion would be to mistake completely the nature of man. We encounter here a sophism analogous to the one we have already refuted on the subject of the interest of capital. Interest has a tendency to fall, it is said; then it is destined ultimately to disappear altogether. Value and property go on diminishing; then they are destined, it is now said, to be annihilated.

The whole sophism consists in omitting the words, *for each determinate result.* It is quite true that men obtain *determinate results* with a less amount of effort—it is in this respect that they are progressive and perfectible—it is on this account that we are able to affirm that the *relative* domain of property becomes narrower, looking at it as regards each given satisfaction.

But it is not true that all the *results* which it is *possible* to obtain are ever exhausted, and hence it is absurd to suppose that it is in the nature of progress to lessen or limit the *absolute* domain of property.

We have repeated often, and in every shape, that each given effort may, in course of time, serve as the vehicle of a greater amount of gratuitous utility, without our being warranted thence to conclude that men should ever cease to make efforts. All that we can conclude from it is, that their forces, thus rendered disposable, will be employed in combating other obstacles, and will realize, with equal labour, satisfactions hitherto unknown.

I must enlarge still farther on this idea. These are not times to leave anything to possible misconstruction when we venture to pronounce the fearful words, Property and Community.

Man in a state of isolation can, at any given moment of his existence, exert only a certain amount of effort; and the same thing holds of society.

When man in a state of isolation realizes a step of progress, by making natural agents co-operate with his own labour, the sum of his efforts is reduced by so much, *in relation to the useful result sought for.* It would be reduced not relatively only, but *absolutely*, if this man, content with his original condition, should convert his progress into leisure, and should abstain from devoting to the acquisition of new enjoyments that portion of effort which is now rendered disposable. That would take for granted that ambition, desire, aspiration, were limited forces, and that the human heart was not indefinitely expansible; but it is quite otherwise. Robinson Crusoe has no sooner handed over part of his work to natural agents, than he devotes his efforts to new enterprises. The sum

total of his efforts remains the same,—but one portion of these efforts, aided by a greater amount of natural and gratuitous co-operation, has become more productive, more prolific. This is exactly the phenomenon which we see realized in society.

Because the plough, the harrow, the hammer, the saw, oxen and horses, the sail, water-power, steam, have successively relieved mankind from an enormous amount of labour, in proportion to each result obtained, it does not necessarily follow that this labour, thus set free and rendered disposable, should lie dormant. Remember what has been already said as to the indefinite expansibility of our wants and desires—and note what is passing around you—and you will not fail to see that as often as man succeeds in vanquishing an obstacle by the aid of natural agents, he sets his own forces to grapple with other obstacles. We have more facility in the art of printing than we had formerly, but we print more. Each book corresponds to a less amount of human effort, to less value, less property; but we have more books, and, on the whole, the same amount of effort, value, property. The same thing might be said of clothing, of houses, of railways, of all human productions. It is not the aggregate of values which has diminished; it is the aggregate of utilities which has increased. It is not the *absolute* domain of Property which has been narrowed; it is the absolute domain of Community which has been enlarged. Progress has not paralyzed labour; it has augmented wealth.

Things that are gratuitous and common to all are within the domain of natural forces; and it is as true in theory as in fact that this domain is constantly extending.

Value and Property are within the domain of human efforts, of reciprocal services, and this domain becomes narrower and narrower as regards each given result, but not as regards the aggregate of results; as regards each determinate satisfaction, but not as regards the aggregate of satisfactions, because the amount of *possible* enjoyments is without limit.

It is as true, then, that relative Property gives place to Community, as it is false that absolute Property tends to disappear altogether. Property is a pioneer which accomplishes its work in one circle, and then passes into another. Before property could disappear altogether we must suppose every obstacle to have been removed, labour to have been superseded, human efforts to have become useless; we must suppose men to have no longer need to effect exchanges, or render services to each other; we must sup-

pose all production to be spontaneous, and enjoyment to spring directly from desire; in a word, we must suppose men to have become equal to gods. Then, indeed, all would be gratuitous, and we should have all things in common. Effort, service, value, property, everything indicative of our native weakness and infirmity, would cease to exist.

In vain man raises himself in the social scale, and advances on the road of civilisation—he is as far as ever from Omnipotence. It is one of the attributes of the Divinity, as far as we can understand what is so much above human reason, that between volition and result no obstacle is interposed. God said, *Let there be light, and there was light.* And it is the powerlessness of man to express that to which there is so little analogous in his own nature which reduced Moses to the necessity of supposing between the divine will and the creation of light the intervention of an obstacle, in the shape even of a word to be pronounced. But whatever advance man, in virtue of his progressive nature, may be destined yet to make, we may safely affirm that he will never succeed in freeing himself entirely from the obstacles which encumber his path, or in rendering himself independent of the labour of his head and of his hands. The reason is obvious. In proportion as certain obstacles are overcome, his desires dilate and expand, and new obstacles oppose themselves to new efforts. We shall always, then, have labour to perform, to exchange, to estimate, and to value. Property will exist until the consummation of all things, increasing in mass in proportion as men become more active and more numerous; whilst at the same time each effort, each service, each value, each portion of property, considered relatively, will, in passing from hand to hand, serve as the vehicle of an increasing proportion of common and gratuitous utility.

The reader will observe that we use the word Property in a very extended sense, but a sense which on that account is not the less exact. *Property is the right which a man possesses of applying to his own use his own efforts, or of not giving them away except in consideration of equivalent efforts.* The distinction between Proprietors and Prolétaires, then, is radically false, unless it is pretended that there is a class of men who do no work, who have no control over their own exertions, or over the services which they render and those which they receive in exchange.

It is wrong to restrict the term Property to one of its special

forms, to capital, to land, to what yields interest or rent; and it is in consequence of this erroneous definition that we proceed afterwards to separate men into two antagonist classes. Analysis demonstrates that interest and rent are the fruit of services rendered, and have the same origin, the same nature, the same rights as manual labour.

The world may be regarded as a vast workshop which Providence has supplied abundantly with materials and forces of which human labour makes use. Anterior efforts, present efforts, even future efforts, or promises of efforts, are exchanged for each other. Their relative merit, as established by exchange, and independently of gratuitous forces and materials, brings out the element of value; and it is of the value created by each individual that each is owner or proprietor.

But what does it signify, it may be said, that a man is proprietor only of the value, or of the acknowledged merit of his service? The possession of the value carries along with it that of the utility which is mingled with it. John has two sacks of corn. Peter has only one. John, you say, is twice as rich in *value*. Surely, then, he is also twice as rich in utility, even natural utility. He has twice as much to eat.

Unquestionably it is so; but has he not performed double the labour?

Let us come, nevertheless, to the root of the objection.

Essential, absolute wealth resides, as we have said, in utility. The very word implies this. It is *utility* alone which renders *service* (*uti*—in French *servir*). It alone has relation to our wants, and it is it alone which man has in view when he devotes himself to labour. Utility at all events is the ultimate object of pursuit; for things do not satisfy our hunger or quench our thirst because they include value, but because they possess utility.

We must take into account, however, the phenomenon which society exhibits in this respect.

Man in a state of isolation seeks to realize utility without thinking about value, of which, in that state, he can have no idea.

In the social state, on the contrary, man seeks to realize value irrespective of utility. The commodity he produces is not intended to satisfy his own wants, and he has little interest in its being useful or not. It is for the person who desires to acquire it to judge of that. What concerns the producer is, that it should bear as high a value as possible in the market, as he is certain that the

utilities he has to receive in return will be in proportion to the value of what he carries thither.

The division of labour and of occupations leads to this result, that each produces what he does not himself consume, and consumes what he does not himself produce. As producers, what we are in quest of is value; as consumers, what we seek is utility. Universal experience testifies to this. The man who polishes a diamond, or embroiders lace, or distils brandy, or cultivates the poppy, never inquires whether the consumption of these commodities is good or bad in itself. He gives his work, and if his work realizes value, that is enough for him.

And let me here remark in passing, that the moral or immoral has nothing to do with labour, but with desire; and that society is improved, not by rendering the producer, but the consumer, more moral. What an outcry was raised against the English on account of their cultivating opium in India for the deliberate purpose, it was said, of poisoning the Chinese! This was to misunderstand and misapply the principle of morality. No one will ever be effectually prevented from producing a commodity which, being in demand, is possessed of value. It is for the man who demands a particular species of enjoyment to calculate the effects of it; and it is in vain that we attempt to divorce foresight from responsibility. Our vine-growers produce wine, and will produce it as long as it possesses value, without troubling themselves to inquire whether this wine leads to drunkenness in Europe or to suicide in America. It is the judgment which men form as to their wants and satisfactions that determines the direction of labour. This is true even of man in an isolated state; and if a foolish vanity had spoken more loudly to Robinson Crusoe than hunger, he would, in place of devoting his time to the chase, have employed it in arranging feathers for his hat. It is the same with nations as with individuals—serious people have serious pursuits, and frivolous people devote themselves to frivolous occupations.

But to return:

The man who works for himself has in view utility.

The man who works for others has in view value.

Now Property, as I have defined it, is founded on Value, and value being simply a relation, it follows that property is also a relation.

Were there only one man upon the earth, the idea of Property would never enter his mind. Monarch of all he surveyed, sur-

rounded with utilities which he had only to adapt to his use, never encountering any analogous right to serve as a limit to his own, how should it ever come into his head to say *This is mine?* That would imply the correlative assertion, *This is not mine*, or *This belongs to another*. *Meum* and *tuum* are inconsistent with isolation, and the word Property necessarily implies relation; but it gives us emphatically to understand that a thing is *proper* to one person, only by giving us to understand that it is not *proper* to anybody else.

"The first man," says Rousseau, "who having enclosed a field, took it into his head to say *This is mine*, was the true founder of civil society."

What does the enclosure mean if it be not indicative of exclusion, and consequently of relation? If its object were only to defend the field against the intrusion of animals, it was a precaution, not a sign of property. A boundary, on the contrary, is a mark of property, not of precaution.

Thus men are truly proprietors only in relation to one another; and this being so, of what are they proprietors? Of value, as we discover very clearly in the exchanges they make with each other.

Let us, according to our usual practice, take a very simple case by way of illustration.

Nature labours, and has done so probably from all eternity, to invest spring water with those qualities which fit it for quenching our thirst, and which qualities, so far as we are concerned, constitute its *utility*. It is assuredly not my work, for it has been elaborated without my assistance, and quite unknown to me. In this respect, I can truly say that water is to me the gratuitous gift of God. What is my own *proper* work is the effort which I have made in going to fetch my supply of water for the day.

Of what do I become proprietor by that act?

As regards myself, I am proprietor, if I may use the expression, of all the utility with which nature has invested this water. I can turn it to my own use in any way I think proper. It is for that purpose that I have taken the trouble to fetch it. To dispute my right would be to say that, although men cannot live without drinking, they have no right to drink the water which they have procured by their own exertions. I do not believe that the Communists, although they go very far, will go the length of asserting this, and even under the *régime* of Cabet, the lambs of Icaria would be allowed to quench their thirst in the limpid stream.

But in relation to other men, who are free to do as I do, I am not, and cannot be, proprietor except of what is called, by metonymy, *the value of the water*, that is to say, the value of the *service* which I render in procuring it.

My right to drink this water being granted, it is impossible to contest my right to give it away. And the right of the other contracting party to go to the spring, as I did, and draw water for himself, being admitted, it is equally impossible to contest his right to accept the water which I have fetched. If the one has a right to give, and the other, in consideration of a payment voluntarily bargained for, to accept, this water, the first is then the *proprietor* in relation to the second. It is sad to write upon Political Economy at a time when we cannot advance a step without having recourse to demonstrations so puerile.

But on what basis is the arrangement we have supposed come to? It is essential to know this, in order to appreciate the whole social bearing of the word Property,—a word which sounds so ill in the ears of democratic sentimentalism.

It is clear that, both parties being free, we must take into consideration the trouble I have had, and the trouble I have saved to the other party, as the circumstances which constitute value. We discuss the conditions of the bargain, and, if we come to terms, there is neither exaggeration nor subtilty in saying that my neighbour has acquired *gratuitously*, or, if you will, as *gratuitously as I did*, all the natural utility of the water. Do you desire proof that the conditions, more or less onerous, of the transaction are determined by the human efforts and not by the intrinsic utility? It will be granted that the utility remains the same whether the spring is distant or near at hand. It is the amount of exertion made, or to be made, which depends upon the distance; and since the remuneration varies with the exertion, it is in the latter, and not in the utility, that the principle of relative value and Property resides.

It is certain, then, that, in relation to others, I am, and can be, proprietor only of my efforts, of my services, which have nothing in common with the recondite and mysterious processes by which nature communicates utility to the things which are the subject of those services. It would be in vain for me to carry my pretensions farther—at this point we must always in fact encounter the limit of Property;—for if I exact more than the value of my services, my neighbour will do the work for himself. This limit

much more ingenious than the artificial systems of Plato, Sir Thomas More, Fénélon, or Monsieur Cabet.

That there are satisfactions which men enjoy, gratuitously and in common, upon a footing of the most perfect equality,—that there is in the social order, underlying Property, a real Community,—no one will dispute. To see this it is not necessary that you should be either an Economist or a Socialist, but that you should have eyes in your head. In certain respects all the children of God are treated in precisely the same way. All are equal as regards the law of gravitation which attaches them to the earth, as regards the air we breathe, the light of day, the water of the brook. This vast and measureless common fund, which has nothing whatever to do with Value or Property, J. B. Say denominates *natural wealth*, in opposition to *social wealth;* Proudhon, *natural property*, in opposition to *acquired property;* Considérant, *natural capital*, in opposition to *capital which is created;* Saint-Chamans, the *wealth of enjoyment*, in opposition to the *wealth of value*. We have denominated it *gratuitous utility*, in contradistinction to *onerous utility*. Call it what you will, it exists, and that entitles us to say that there is among men a common fund of gratuitous and equal satisfactions.

And if wealth, *social, acquired, created, of value, onerous*, in a word, Property, is unequally distributed, we cannot affirm that it is unjustly so, seeing that it is in each man's case proportional to the *services* which give rise to it, and of which it is simply the measure and estimate. Besides, it is clear that this Inequality is lessened by the existence of the common fund, in virtue of the mathematical rule: the relative inequality of two unequal numbers is lessened by adding equal numbers to each of them. When our inventories, then, show that one man is twice as rich as another man, that proportion ceases to be exact when we take into consideration their equal share in the gratuitous utility furnished by nature, and the inequality would be gradually effaced and wiped away if this common fund were itself progressive.

The problem, then, is to find out whether this *common fund* is a fixed invariable quantity, given to mankind by Providence in the beginning, and once for all, above which the *appropriated fund* is superimposed, apart from the existence of any relation or action between these two orders of phenomena.

Economists have concluded that the social order had no influence upon this natural and common fund of wealth; and this

is their reason for excluding it from the domain of Political Economy.

The Socialists go farther. They believe that the constitution of society tends to make this common fund pass into the region of Property, that it consecrates, to the profit of a few, the usurpation of what belongs to all; and this is the reason why they rise up against Political Economy, which denies this fatal tendency, and against modern society, which submits to it.

The truth is, that Socialism, in this particular, taxes Political Economy with inconsistency, and with some justice too; for after having declared that there are no relations between common and appropriated wealth, Economists have invalidated their own assertion, and prepared the way for the socialist grievance. They did so the moment that, confounding value with utility, they asserted that the materials and forces of nature, that is to say, the gifts of God, had an intrinsic value, a value inherent in them,—for value implies, always and necessarily, appropriation. From that moment they lost the right and the means of logically vindicating Property.

What I maintain—and maintain with a conviction amounting to absolute certainty—is this: that the appropriated fund exerts a constant action upon the fund which is common and unappropriated, and in this respect the first assertion of the Economists is erroneous. But the second assertion, as developed and explained by socialism, is still more fatal; for the action in question does not take place in a way to make the common fund pass into the appropriated fund, but, on the contrary, to make the appropriated fund pass incessantly into the common domain. Property, just and legitimate in itself, because always representing services, tends to transform onerous, into gratuitous utility. It is the spur which urges on human intelligence to make latent natural forces operative. It struggles, and undoubtedly for our benefit, against the obstacles which render utility onerous. And when the obstacle has been to a certain extent removed, it is found that, to that extent, it has been removed to the profit and advantage of all. Then indefatigable Property challenges and encounters other obstacles, and goes on, raising, always and without intermission, the level of humanity, realizing more and more Community, and, with Community, Equality, among the great family of mankind.

In this consists the truly marvellous Harmony of the natural

social order. This harmony I am unable to describe without combating objections which are perpetually recurring, and without falling into wearisome repetitions. No matter, I submit—let the reader also exercise a little patience on his side.

Make yourself master, first of all, of this fundamental idea, that when, in any case, there is no obstacle between desire and satisfaction (there is none, for instance, between our eyes and the light of day)—there is no effort to make, no service to render, either to ourselves or to other people, and value and Property have no existence. When an obstacle exists, the whole series comes into play. First, we have Effort—then a voluntary exchange of efforts or Services—then a comparative appreciation of those services, or Value; lastly, the right of each to enjoy the utilities attached to these values, or Property.

If in this struggle against obstacles, which are always uniform, the co-operation of nature and that of labour were also always in equal proportion, Property and Community would advance in parallel lines, without changing their relative proportions.

But it is not so. The universal aim of men in all their enterprises is to diminish the proportion between effort and result, and for that purpose to enlist more and more in their work the assistance of natural agents. No agriculturist, manufacturer, merchant, artisan, shipowner, artist, but makes this his constant study. In that direction all their faculties are bent. For that purpose they invent tools and machines, and avail themselves of the chemical and mechanical forces of the elements, divide their occupations, and unite their efforts. To accomplish more with less, such is the eternal problem which they propose to themselves at all times, in all places, in all situations, in everything. Who doubts that in all this they are prompted by self-interest? What other stimulant could excite them to the same energy? Every man moreover is charged with the care of his own existence and advancement. What, then, should constitute the mainspring of his movements but self-interest? You express your astonishment, but wait till I have done, and you will find that if each cares for himself, God cares for us all.

Our constant study, then, is to diminish the proportion which the effort bears to the useful effect sought to be produced. But when the effort is lessened, whether by the removal of obstacles or the intervention of machinery, by the division of labour, the union of forces, or the assistance of natural agents, &c., this di-

minished effort is less highly appreciated in relation to others;—we render less *service* in making the effort for another. There is less value, and we are justified in saying that the domain of Property has receded. Is the useful effect on that account lost? By hypothesis it is not. Where then has it gone to? It has passed into the domain of Community. As regards that portion of human effort which the useful effect no longer absorbs, it is not on that account sterile—it is turned to other acquisitions. Obstacles present themselves, and will always present themselves, to the indefinite expansibility of our physical, moral, and intellectual wants, to an extent sufficient to ensure that the labour set free in one department will find employment in another. And it is in this way that the appropriated fund remaining always the same, the common fund dilates and expands, like a circle the radius of which is always enlarging.

Apart from this consideration, how could we explain progress or civilisation, however imperfect? Let us turn our regards upon ourselves, and consider our feebleness. Let us compare our own individual vigour and knowledge with the vigour and knowledge necessary to produce the innumerable satisfactions which we derive from society. We shall soon be convinced that were we reduced to our proper efforts, we could not obtain a hundred thousandth part of them, even if millions of acres of uncultivated land were placed at the disposal of each one of us. It is positively certain that a given amount of human effort will realize an immeasurably greater result at the present day than it could in the days of the Druids. If that were true only of an individual, the natural conclusion would be that he lives and prospers at the expense of his fellows. But since this phenomenon is manifested in all the members of the human family, we are led to the comfortable conclusion that things not our own have come to our aid; that the gratuitous co-operation of nature is in larger and larger measure added to our own efforts, and that it remains gratuitous through all our transactions; for were it not gratuitous, it would explain nothing.

From what we have said, we may deduce these formulas:

Property is Value, and Value is Property;

That which has no Value is gratuitous, and what is gratuitous is common;

A fall of Value is an approximation towards the gratuitous;

Such approximation is a partial realization of Community.

There are times when one cannot give utterance to certain words without being exposed to false interpretations. There are always people ready to cry out, in a critical or in a laudatory spirit, according to the sect they belong to: "The author talks of Community—he must be a Communist." I expect this, and resign myself to it. And yet I must endeavour to guard myself against such hasty inferences.

The reader must have been very inattentive (and the most formidable class of readers are those who turn over books without attending to what they read) if he has not observed the great gulf which interposes itself between Community and Communism. The two ideas are separated by the entire domain not only of property, but of liberty, right, justice, and even of human personality.

Community applies to those things which we enjoy in common by the destination of Providence; because, exacting no effort in order to adapt them to our use, they give rise to no service, no transaction, no Property. The foundation of property is the right which we possess to render services to ourselves, or to others on condition of a return.

What Communism wishes to render common is, not the gratuitous gift of God, but human effort—service.

It desires that each man should carry the fruit of his labour to the common stock, and that afterwards an equitable distribution of that stock should be made by authority.

Now, of two things one. Either the distribution is proportional to the stake which each has contributed, or it is made upon another principle.

In the first case, Communism aims at realizing, as regards result, the present order of things—only substituting the arbitrary will of one for the liberty of all.

In the second case, what must be the basis of the division? Communism answers, Equality. What! Equality, without regard to the difference of pains taken, of labour undergone! You are to have an *equal share* whether you have worked six hours or twelve—mechanically, or with intelligence! Of all inequalities surely that would be the most shocking; besides it would be the destruction of all liberty, all activity, all dignity, all sagacity. You pretend to put an end to competition, but in truth you only transform it. The competition at present is, who shall work most and best. Under your régime it would be, who should work worst and least.

Communism misunderstands or disowns the very nature of man. Effort is painful in itself. What urges us to make it? It can only be a feeling more painful still, a want to satisfy, a suffering to remove, a good to be realized. Our moving principle, then, is self-interest. When you ask the Communists what they would substitute for this, they answer, by the mouth of Louis Blanc, *The point of honour*, and by that of Monsieur Cabet, *Fraternity*. Enable me, then, to experience the sensations of others, in order that I may know what direction to impress upon my industry.

I should like to have it explained what this point of honour, this fraternity, which are to be set to work in society at the instigation and under the direction of Messieurs Louis Blanc and Cabet, really mean.

But it is not my business in this place to refute Communism, which is opposed in everything to the system which it is my object to establish.

We recognise the right of every man to serve himself, or to serve others on conditions freely stipulated. Communism denies this right, since it masses together and centralizes all services in the hands of an arbitrary authority.

Our doctrine is based upon Property. Communism is founded on systematic spoliation. It consists in handing over to one, without compensation, the labour of another. In fact, did it distribute to each according to his labour, it would recognise property, and would be no longer Communism.

Our doctrine is founded on liberty. In truth, property and liberty are in our eyes one and the same thing, for that which constitutes a man the proprietor of his service is his right and power of disposing of it. Communism annihilates liberty, since it leaves to no one the free disposal of his labour.

Our doctrine is founded on justice—Communism on injustice. That follows clearly from what has been already said.

There is only one point of contact, then, between the communists and us—it is the similarity of two syllables, in the words *communism* and *community*.

But this similarity of sounds should not mislead the reader. Whilst communism is the negation of Property, we find in our doctrine of Community the most explicit affirmation and the most positive demonstration of property.

If the legitimacy of property has appeared doubtful and inexplicable, even to men who are not communists, the reason is, that

they believe that it concentrates in the hands of some, to the exclusion of others, those gifts of God which were originally common. We believe we have entirely dissipated that doubt by demonstrating that what is common by providential destination remains common in all human transactions,—the domain of property never extending beyond that of value—of right onerously acquired by services rendered.

Thus explained, property is vindicated; for who but a fool could pretend that men have no right to their own labour—no right to receive the voluntary services of those to whom they have rendered voluntary services?

There is another word upon which I must offer some explanation, for of late it has been strangely misapplied—I mean the word *gratuitous*. I need not say that I denominate gratuitous, not what costs a man nothing because he has deprived another of it, but what has cost nothing to anyone.

When Diogenes warmed himself in the sun, he might be said to warm himself gratuitously, for he obtained from the divine liberality a satisfaction which exacted no labour either from himself or his contemporaries. Nor does the heat of the sun's rays cease to be gratuitous when the proprietor avails himself of it to ripen his corn and his grapes, seeing that in selling his grapes or his corn he is paid for his own services and not for those of the sun. This may be an erroneous view (in which case we have no alternative but to become communists); but at any rate this is the sense in which I use the word *gratuitous*, and this is what it evidently means.

Much has been said, since the establishment of the Republic, of *gratuitous* credit, and *gratuitous* instruction. But it is evident that a gross sophism lurks under this phraseology. Can the State shed abroad instruction like the light of day without its costing anything to anybody. Can it cover the country with institutions and professors without their being paid in one shape or another? Instead of leaving each individual to demand and to remunerate voluntarily this description of service, the State may lay hold of the remuneration, taken by taxation from the pockets of the citizens, and distribute among them instruction of its own selection, without exacting from them a second remuneration. This is all that can be effected by government interference—and in this case, those who do not learn pay for those who do, those who learn little for those who learn much, those who are destined to manual labour

for those who embrace learned professions. This is Communism applied to one branch of human activity. Under this régime, of which I am not called upon here to give an opinion, it might very well be said that *instruction is common*, but it would be ridiculous to say that *instruction is gratuitous*. Gratuitous! Yes, for some of those who receive it, but not for those who have to pay for it, if not to the teacher, at least to the tax-gatherer.

For that matter, there is nothing which the State can give *gratuitously;* and if the word were not a mystification, it is not only *gratuitous* education which we should demand from the State, but *gratuitous* food, *gratuitous* clothing, *gratuitous* lodging, &c. Let us take care. The people are not far from going this length, and there are already among us those who demand *gratuitous* credit, *gratuitous* tools, and instruments of labour, &c. Dupes of a word, we have made one step towards Communism; why should we not make a second, and a third, until all liberty, all justice, and all property have passed away? Will it be urged that instruction is so universally necessary that we may depart somewhat from right and principle in this instance? But then, are not food and sustenance still more necessary than education? *Primò vivere, deindè philosophari*, the people may say; and I know not in truth what answer we can make to them.

Who knows? Those who charge me with Communism for having demonstrated the natural community of the gifts of God, are perhaps the very people who seek to violate justice in the matter of education, that is to say, to attack property in its essence. Such inconsistencies are more surprising than uncommon.

IX.

LANDED PROPERTY.

If the leading idea of this work is well founded, the relations of mankind with the external world must be viewed in this way:

God created the earth. On it, and within it, he has placed a multitude of things which are useful to man, inasmuch as they are adapted to satisfy his wants.

God has, besides, endued matter with forces—gravitation, elasticity, porosity, compressibility, heat, light, electricity, crystallization, vegetable life.

He has placed man in the middle of these materials and forces, which he has delivered over to him gratuitously.

Men set themselves to exercise their activity upon these materials and forces; and in this way they render service to themselves. They also work for one another, and in this way render reciprocal services. These services, compared by the act of exchange, give rise to the idea of Value, and Value to that of Property.

Each man, then, becomes an owner or proprietor in proportion to the services he has rendered. But the materials and forces given by God to man gratuitously, at the beginning, have continued gratuitous, and are and must continue to be so through all our transactions; for in the estimates and appreciations to which exchange gives rise, the *equivalents* are *human services*, not the *gifts of God.*

Hence it follows that no human being, so long as transactions are free, can ever cease to be the usufructuary of these gifts. A single condition is laid down, which is, that we shall execute the labour necessary to make them available to us, or, if any one makes this exertion for us, that we make for him an equivalent exertion.

If this account of the matter be true, Property is indeed unassailable.

The universal instinct of mankind, more infallible than the lucubrations of any individual, had adopted this view of the subject without refining upon it, when theory began to scrutinize the foundations of Property.

Theory unhappily began in confusion, mistaking Utility for Value, and attributing an inherent *value*, independent of all human service, to the materials or forces of nature. From that moment property became unintelligible, and incapable of justification.

For utility is the relation between commodities and our organization. It necessarily implies neither efforts, nor transactions, nor comparisons. We can conceive of it *per se*, and in relation to man in a state of isolation. Value, on the contrary, is a relation of man to man. To exist at all, it must exist in duplicate. Nothing isolated can be compared. Value implies that the person in possession of it does not transfer it except for an equivalent value. The theory, then, which confounds these two ideas, takes for granted that a person, in effecting an exchange, gives pretended value of natural creation for true value of human creation, utility which exacts no labour for utility which does exact it; in other words, that he can profit by the labour of another without working himself. Property, thus understood, is called first of all a *necessary monopoly*, then simply a *monopoly*,—then it is branded as *illegitimate*, and last of all as *robbery*.

Landed Property receives the first blow, and so it should. Not that natural agents do not bear their part in all manufactures, but these agents manifest themselves more strikingly to the eyes of the vulgar in the phenomena of vegetable and animal life, in the production of food, and of what are improperly called *matières premières* [raw materials], which are the special products of agriculture.

Besides, if there be any one monopoly more revolting than another, it is undoubtedly a monopoly which applies to the first necessaries of life.

The confusion which I am exposing, and which is specious in a scientific view, since no theorist I am acquainted with has got rid of it, becomes still more specious when we look at what is passing around us.

We see the landed Proprietor frequently living without labour, and we draw the conclusion, which is plausible enough, that "he must surely be remunerated for something else than his work." And what can this something else be, if not the fecundity, the

productiveness, the co-operation of the soil as an instrument? It is, then, the *rent of land* which we must brand, in the language of the times, with the names of necessary monopoly, privilege, illegitimacy, theft.

We must admit that the authors of this theory have encountered a fact which must have powerfully tended to mislead them. Few land estates in Europe have escaped from conquest and all its attendant abuses; and science has confounded the violent methods by which landed property has been acquired with the methods by which it is naturally formed.

But we must not imagine that the false definition of the word *value* tends only to unsettle landed property. Logic is a terrible and indefatigable power, whether it sets out with a good or a bad principle! As the earth, it is said, makes light, heat, electricity, vegetable life, &c., co-operate in the production of value, does not capital in the same way make gravitation, elasticity, the wind, &c., concur in producing value? There are other men, then, besides agriculturists who are paid for the intervention of natural agents. This remuneration comes to capitalists in the shape of Interest, just as it comes to proprietors in the shape of Rent. War, then, must be declared against Interest as it has been against Rent!

Property has had a succession of blows aimed at it in the name of this principle, false as I think, true according to the Economists and *Egalitaires*, namely, that *natural agents possess or create value.* This is a postulate upon which all schools are agreed. They differ only in the boldness or timidity of their deductions.

The Economists say that *property* (in land) *is a monopoly*, but a monopoly which is necessary, and which must be maintained.

The Socialists say that *property* (in land) *is a monopoly*, but a monopoly which is necessary, and which must be maintained,—and they demand compensation for it in the shape of right to employment [*le droit au travail*].

The Communists and *Egalitaires* say that *property* (in general) *is a monopoly*, and must be destroyed.

For myself, I say most emphatically that PROPERTY IS NOT A MONOPOLY. Your premises are false, and your three conclusions, athough they differ, are false also. PROPERTY IS NOT A MONOPOLY, and consequently it is not incumbent on us either to tolerate it by way of favour, or to demand compensation for it, or to destroy it.

Let us pass briefly in review the opinions of writers of various schools on this important subject.

The English Economists lay down this principle, upon which they appear to be unanimous, that *value comes from labour*. Were they consistent in their use of terms, it might be so; but are they consistent? The reader will judge. He will see whether they do not always and everywhere confound gratuitous Utility, which is incapable of remuneration, and destitute of value, with onerous Utility, which we owe exclusively to labour, and which according to them is alone possessed of value.

ADAM SMITH.—"In agriculture nature labours along with man; and *although her labour costs no expense*, its produce *has its value*, as well as that of the most expensive workmen.*

Here we have nature producing value. The purchaser of corn must pay for it, although it has cost nothing to anybody, not even labour. Who then dares come forward to demand this pretended *value?* Substitute for that word the word *utility*, and all becomes clear, Property is vindicated, and justice satisfied.

"This rent," proceeds Smith, "may be considered as the produce of those *powers of nature*, the use of which the landlord lends to the farmer. . . . . It (rent!) is the *work of nature*, which remains after deducting or compensating *everything which can be regarded as the work of man*. It is seldom less than a fourth, and frequently more than a third of the whole produce. No equal quantity of productive labour employed in manufactures can ever occasion so great a reproduction. In them nature does nothing; man does all."†

Is it possible in as few words to include a greater number of dangerous errors? At this rate a fourth or a third part of the *value* of human subsistence is due *exclusively* to the power of nature. And yet the proprietor is paid by the farmer, and the farmer by the corn-consumer, for this pretended value which remains after *the work of man* has been remunerated. And this is the basis on which it is desired to place Property! And, then, what becomes of the axiom that *all value comes from labour?*

Next, we have nature doing nothing in manufactures! Do gravitation, the elasticity of the air, and animal force, not aid the manufacturer? These forces act in our manufactures just as they act in our fields; they produce gratuitously, not value, but utility. Were it otherwise, property in capital would be as much exposed to the attacks of Communism as property in land.

BUCHANAN.—This commentator, adopting the theory of his master on Rent, is pressed by logic to blame him for having represented it as advantageous:

"In dwelling on the reproduction of rent as so great an advantage to society, Smith does not reflect that rent is the effect of high price, and that what

* *Wealth of Nations* (Buchanan's 2d edit.), vol. ii. p. 53. † *Ib.*, vol. ii. p. 54.

the landlord gains in this way, he gains *at the expense* of the community at large. There is no absolute gain to society by the reproduction of rent. It is only one class profiting at the expense of another class."*

Here the logical deduction makes its appearance—rent is an injustice.

RICARDO.—"Rent is that portion of the produce of the earth *which is paid* to the landlord for the use of the *original and indestructible powers of the soil.*"

And, in order that there may be no mistake, the author adds:

"It is often confounded with the interest and profit of capital. . . . . It is evident that a portion only of the money annually to be paid for the improved farm would be given for *the original and indestructible powers of the soil*, the other portion would be paid for the use of the capital which had been employed in ameliorating the quality of the land, and in erecting such buildings as were necessary to secure and preserve the produce. . . . In the future pages of this work, then, whenever I speak of the rent of land, I wish to be understood as speaking of that compensation which is paid to the owner of land *for the use of its original and indestructible powers.*"†

M'CULLOCH.—What is properly termed Rent is the sum paid *for the use of the natural and inherent powers of the soil.* It is entirely distinct from the sum paid for the use of buildings, enclosures, roads, or other ameliorations. *Rent is then always a monopoly.*"

SCROPE.—"The value of land, and its power of yielding Rent, are due to two circumstances,—1st, The appropriation of *its natural powers;* 2d, The labour applied to its amelioration."

We are not kept long waiting for the consequence:

"Under the first of these relations *rent is a monopoly.* It restricts our usufruct and enjoyment of the gifts which God has given to men for the satisfaction of their wants. This restriction *is just, only in as far as it is necessary* for the common good."

In what perplexity must those good souls be landed who refuse to admit anything to be necessary which is not just?

Scrope ends with these words:

"When it goes beyond this point, it must be modified on the same principle which caused it to be established."

It is impossible for the reader not to perceive that these authors lead us to a negation of Property, and lead us to it very logically, in setting out with the proposition that the proprietor is paid for the gifts of God. Here we have rent held up as an injustice established by Law under the pressure of necessity, and which laws may modify or destroy under the pressure of another necessity. The Communists have never gone farther than this.

SENIOR.—"The instruments of production are labour and natural agents. Natural agents having been appropriated, proprietors *charge for their use* under the form of Rent, which is the recompense of no sacrifice whatever, and

* *Wealth of Nations* (Buchanan's 2d edit.), vol ii. p. 55, note.

† *Ricardo's Political Works* (M'Culloch's edit.), pp. 34, 35.

is received by those who have neither laboured nor put by, but who merely hold out their hands to accept the offerings of the rest of the community."

After giving this heavy blow to property, Mr Senior explains that one portion of Rent resolves itself into the Interest of Capital, and then adds:

"The surplus is taken by *the proprietor of the natural agent*, and is his reward, *not for having laboured or abstained*, but simply for not having withheld what he was able to withhold; for having permitted the gifts of nature to be accepted."

You will observe that this is still the same theory. The proprietor is supposed to interpose himself between the hungry mouth and the food which God has vouchsafed under the condition of labour. The proprietor who has co-operated in the work of production, charges first of all for his co-operation, which is just, and then he makes a second charge for the work of nature, for the use of natural agents, for the indestructible powers of the soil, which is iniquitous.

This theory of the English Economists, which has been farther developed by Mill, Malthus, and others, we are sorry to find making its way also on the Continent.

"When a franc's worth of seed," says SCIALOJA, "produces a hundred francs' worth of corn, this augmentation of *value* is mainly due to the soil."

This is to confound Utility with value. He might just as well have said, when water which costs only one sou at ten yards distance from the spring, costs ten sous at 100 yards, this augmentation of value is due in part to the intervention of nature.

FLOREZ ESTRADA.—"Rent is that portion of the agricultural product which remains *after all the costs of production have been defrayed*."

Then the proprietor receives something for nothing.

The English Economists all set out by announcing the principle that *value comes from labour*, and they are guilty of inconsistency when they afterwards attribute value to the inherent *powers of the soil*.

The French Economists in general make value to consist in utility; but, confounding gratuitous with onerous utility, they have not the less assisted in shaking the foundation of Property.

J. B. SAY.—"Land is not the only natural agent which is productive, but it is the only one, or almost the only one, that man has been able to appropriate. The waters of the sea and of our rivers, by their aptitude to impart motion to machines, to afford nourishment to fishes, to float our ships, are likewise possessed of productive power. The wind and the sun's rays work for us; but *happily* no one has been able to say, The wind and the sun are mine, and I must be paid for their services."

M. Say appears from this to lament that any one should be able to say, The land belongs to me, and I must be paid for the service which it renders. *Happily*, say I, it is no more in the power of the proprietor to charge for the services of the soil than for the services of the sun and the wind.

"The earth," continues M. Say, "is an admirable chemical workshop, in which are combined and elaborated a multitude of materials and elements which are produced in the shape of grain, fruit, flax, &c. Nature has presented to man, *gratuitously*, this vast workshop divided into a great number of compartments fitted for various kinds of production. But certain individual members of society have appropriated them, and proclaimed,—This compartment is mine,—that other is mine, and all that is produced in it is my exclusive property. And the astonishing thing is, that this *usurped privilege*, far from having been fatal to the community, has been found productive of advantage to it."

Undoubtedly this arrangement has been advantageous; but why? Just because it is neither a privilege nor usurped, and that the man who exclaims, "This domain is mine," has not had it in his power to add, "What has been produced on it is my exclusive property." On the contrary, he says, "What has been produced is the exclusive property of whoever desires to purchase it, by giving me back simply the same amount of labour which I have undergone, and which in this instance I have saved his undergoing." The co-operation of nature in the work of production, which is gratuitous for me, is gratuitous for him also.

M. Say indeed distinguishes, in the value of corn, the parts contributed by Property, by Capital, and by Labour. He has with the best intention been at great pains to justify this first part of the remuneration which accrues to the proprietor, and which is the recompense of no labour, either anterior or present; but he fails; for, like Scrope, he is obliged to fall back on the last and least satisfactory of all grounds of vindication, *necessity*.

"If it be impossible," he remarks, "for production to be effected, not only without land and without capital, but without these means of production previously becoming *property*, may it not be said that proprietors of land and capital exercise a productive function, since, without the employment of these means, production would not take place?—a convenient function no doubt, but which, in the present state of society, presupposes accumulation, which is the result of production or saving," &c.

The confusion here is palpable. The accumulation has been effected by the proprietor in his character of Capitalist—a character with which at present we have no concern. But what M. Say represents as convenient is the part played by the proprietor, in his proper character of proprietor, exacting a price for the gifts of

God. It is this part which it is necessary to vindicate, and it has no connexion with either accumulation or saving.

"If, then, property in land and in capital" (why assimilate the two?) "be the fruit of production, I am warranted in representing such property as a working and productive machine, for which its author, although sitting with his hands across, is entitled to exact a recompense."

Still the same confusion. The man who constructs a machine is proprietor of a *capital*, from which he legitimately derives an income, because he is paid, not for the labour of the machine, but for his own labour in constructing it. But *land*, or *territorial* property, is *not the result of human production.* What right, then, have we to be paid for its co-operation? The author has here mixed up two different kinds of property in the same category, in order that the same reasons which justify the one may serve for the vindication of the other.

BLANQUI.—"The agriculturist who tills, manures, sows, and reaps his field, furnishes labour, without which nothing would be produced. But the action of the soil in making the seed germinate, and of the sun in bringing the plant to maturity, are independent of that labour, and co-operate in the formation of *the value* represented by the harvest. . . Smith and other Economists pretend that the labour of man is the exclusive source of value. Assuredly the industry of the labourer is not the exclusive source of the value of a sack of corn or a bushel of potatoes. His skill can no more succeed in producing the phenomenon of germination than the patience of the alchymist could succeed in discovering the philosopher's stone. This is evident."

It is impossible to imagine a more complete confusion than we have here, first between utility and value, and then between onerous and gratuitous utility.

JOSEPH GARNIER.—"The rent of the proprietor differs essentially from the wages of the labourer and the profits of the capitalist, inasmuch as these two kinds of remuneration are the recompense, the one of trouble or pains taken, the other of a privation submitted to, and a risk encountered, whilst Rent is received by the proprietor *gratuitously, and in virtue alone of a legal convention* which recognises and maintains in certain individuals the right to landed property."—(*Eléments de l'Économie Politique*, 2e Édition, p. 293.)

In other words, the labourer and capitalist are paid, in the name of equity, for the services they render; and the proprietor is paid, in the name of law, for services which he does not render.

"The boldest innovators do not go farther than to propose the substitution of collective for individual property. *It seems to us that they have reason on their side as regards human right;* but they are wrong practically, inasmuch as they are unable to exhibit the advantages of a better Economical system."... —(*Ibid*, pp. 377, 378.)

"But at the same time, *in avowing that property is a privilege, a monopoly*, we must add, that it is a natural and a useful monopoly. . . .

"In short, it seems to be admitted by Political Economy" [it is so, alas! and here lies the evil] "that property does not flow from divine right, de-

mesnial right, or any other speculative right, but simply from its utility. *It is only a monopoly tolerated in the interest of all*," &c.

This is precisely the judgment pronounced by Scrope, and repeated in modified terms by Say.

I think I have now satisfactorily shown that Political Economy, setting out with the false datum, that "natural agents possess or create value," has arrived at this conclusion, "that property (in as far as it appropriates and is remunerated for this value, which is independent of all human service) is a privilege, a monopoly, a usurpation; but that it is a necessary monopoly, and must be maintained."

It remains for me to show that the Socialists set out with the same postulate, only they modify the conclusion in this way: "Property is a necessary monopoly; it must be maintained, but we must demand, from those who have property, compensation to those who have none, in the shape of Right to Employment."

I shall, then, dispose of the doctrine of the Communists, who, arguing from the same premises, conclude that "Property is a monopoly, and ought to be abolished."

Finally, and at the risk of repetition, I shall, if I can, expose the fallacy of the premises on which all the three conclusions are based, namely, that *natural agents possess or create value.* If I succeed in this, if I demonstrate that natural agents, even when appropriated, produce, not Value, but Utility, which, passingfrom the hands of the proprietor without leaving anything behind it, reaches the consumer gratuitously,—in that case, all—Economists, Socialists, Communists—must at length come to a common understanding to leave the world, in this respect, just as it is.

M. CONSIDÉRANT.*—"In order to discover how and under what conditions *private property* may Legitimately manifest and develop itself, we must get possession of the *fundamental principle of the Right of Property;* and here it is:

"Every man POSSESSES LEGITIMATELY THE THINGS *which have been* CREATED *by his labour, his intelligence, or,* to speak more generally, BY HIS ACTIVITY.

"This Principle is incontestable, and it is right to remark that it contains implicitly the acknowledgment of the Right of all to the Soil. The earth not having been created by man, it follows in fact, from the fundamental principle of Property, that the Soil, which is a common fund given over to the species, can in no shape legitimately become the absolute and exclusive property of this or that individual who has not created *this value.* Let us establish, then, the true Theory of Property, by basing it exclusively on the unexceptionable principle which makes *the legitimacy of Property* hinge upon the fact of *the* CREATION *of the thing, or of the value possessed.* To accomplish this we must direct our reasoning to the origin of industry, that is to say, to the origin and development of agriculture, manufactures, the arts, &c., in human society.

* The words in *italics* and *capitals* are thus printed in the original text.

"Suppose that on a solitary island, on the territory of a nation, or on the entire surface of the earth (for the extent of the field of action makes no difference in our estimate of facts), a generation of mankind devotes itself for the first time to industry—for the first time engages in agriculture, manufactures, &c. Each generation, by its labour, by its intelligence, by the exertion of its own proper activity, *creates products, develops value*, which did not exist on the earth in its rude and primitive state. Is it not perfectly evident that, among the first generation of labourers, Property would conform to Right, PROVIDED *the value or wealth produced by the activity of all* were distributed among the producers IN PROPORTION TO THE CO-OPERATION of each in the creation of the general riches? That is beyond dispute.

"Now, the results of the labour of this generation may be divided into two categories, which it is important to distinguish.

"The *first category* includes the products of the soil, which belong to this first generation in its character of usufructuary, as having been increased, refined, or manufactured by its labour, by its industry. These products, whether raw or manufactured, consist either of objects of consumption or of instruments of labour. It is clear that these products belong, *in entire and legitimate property*, to those who have created them by their activity. Each of them, then, has RIGHT, either to consume these products immediately, to store them up to be disposed of afterwards at pleasure, or to employ them, exchange them, give them away, or transmit them to any one he chooses, without receiving authority from anyone. On this hypothesis, this Property is evidently *Legitimate*, respectable, sacred. We cannot assail it without assailing *Justice, Right, individual liberty*,—without, in short, being guilty of Spoliation.

"*Second category*. But the creations attributable to the industrious activity of this first generation are not all included in the preceding category. This generation has created not only the products which we have just described (objects of consumption and instruments of labour),—it has also added an *additional value* to the *primitive value* of the soil, by cultivation, by erections, by the permanent improvements which it has executed.

"This additional value constitutes evidently a product, a value, due to the activity of the first generation. Now, if by any means (we are not concerned at present with the question of means),—if by any means whatever the property of this additional value is equitably distributed among the different members of society, that is to say, is distributed among them proportionally to the co-operation of each in its creation, each will possess *legitimately* the portion which has fallen to him. He may, then, dispose of this individual Property, legitimate as he sees it to be, exchange it, give it away, or transmit it without control, society having over these values no right or power whatsoever.

"We may, therefore, easily conceive that when the second generation makes its appearance, it will find upon the land two sorts of Capital:

"1st, The *primitive or natural capital*, which has not been created by the men of the first generation—that is, the *value* of the land in its rough, uncultivated state.

"2d, The *capital created* by the first generation; including (1.) the *products*, commodities, and instruments, which shall not have been consumed or used by the first generation; (2.) the additional value which the labour of the first generation has added to the value of the rough, uncultivated land.

"It is evident, then, and results clearly and necessarily from the fundamental principle of the Right of Property, which I have just explained, that each individual of the second generation has an equal right to the *primitive or natural capital*, whilst he has no right to the other species of *capital* which has been *created* by the labour of the first generation. Each individual of the first generation may, then, dispose of his share of this *created capital* in favour of whatever individual of the second generation he may please to select, children, friends, &c.; and no one, not even the State itself, as we have just seen, has

the slightest right (on pretence of Property) to control the disposal which, as donor or testator, he may have made of such capital.

"Observe that on this hypothesis the man of the second generation is already in a better situation than the man of the first, seeing that, besides his right to the *primitive capital*, which is preserved to him, he has his chance of receiving a portion of the *created capital*, that is to say, of a value which he has not produced, and which represents anterior labour.

"If, then, we suppose things to be arranged in society in such a way that,

"1st, The right to the *primitive capital*, that is, the usufruct of the soil in its natural state, is preserved, or that an EQUIVALENT RIGHT is conferred on every individual born within the territory;

"2d, That the *created capital* is continually distributed among men, *as it is produced*, in proportion to the co-operation of each in the production of that capital;

"If, we say, the mechanism of the social organization shall satisfy these two conditions, PROPERTY, under such a régime, would be established IN ITS ABSOLUTE LEGITIMACY, and *Fact* would be in unison with *Right*."—(*Théorie du droit de propriété et du droit au travail*, 3e Édition, p. 17.)

We see here that the socialist author distinguishes between two kinds of value, *created value*, which is the subject of legitimate property, and *uncreated value*, which he denominates the *value of land in its natural state, primitive capital, natural capital*, which cannot become individual property but by usurpation. Now, according to the theory which I am anxious to establish, the ideas expressed by the words *uncreated, primitive, natural*, exclude radically these other ideas, *value, capital*. This is the error in M. Considérant's premises, by which he is landed in this melancholy conclusion:

"That, under the régime of Property, in all civilized nations, the common fund, over which the entire species has a full right of usufruct, has been invaded—has been confiscated—by the few, to the exclusion of the many. Why, were even a single human being excluded from his Right to the Usufruct of this common fund, that very exclusion would of itself constitute an attack upon Right by the institution of Property, and that institution, by sanctioning such invasion of right, would be unjust and illegitimate."

M. Considérant, however, acknowledges that the earth could not be cultivated but for the institution of individual property. Here, then, is a *necessary monopoly*. What can we do, then, to reconcile all, and preserve the rights which the *prolétaires*, or men of no property, have to the primitive, natural, uncreated capital, and to the value of the land in its rough and uncultivated state?

"Why, let Society, which has taken possession of the land, and taken away from man the power of exercising, freely and at will, his four natural rights on the surface of the soil,—let this industrious society cede to the individual, in compensation for the rights of which it has deprived him, the *Right to Employment*.—[LE DROIT AU TRAVAIL.]

Now, nothing in the world is clearer than that this theory, except the conclusion which it seeks to establish, is exactly the

theory of the Economists. The man who purchases an agricultural product remunerates three things: 1st, The actual labour—nothing more legitimate; 2dly, the *additional value* imparted to the soil by anterior labour—still nothing more legitimate; 3dly, and lastly, the *primitive*, or *natural*, or *uncreated capital*,—that gratuitous gift of God, which M. Considérant denominates the *value of the land in its rough and natural state;* Adam Smith, the *indestructible powers of the soil;* Ricardo, the *productive and indestructible powers of the land;* Say, *natural agents. This* is the part which has been *usurped*, according to M. Considérant; *this* is what has been *usurped*, according to J. B. Say. It is *this* which constitutes *illegitimacy* and *spoliation* in the eyes of the Socialists; which constitutes *monopoly* and *privilege* in the eyes of the Economists. They are at one as to the *necessity* and the utility of this arrangement. Without it the earth would produce nothing, say the disciples of Smith; without it we should return to the savage state, re-echo the disciples of Fourier.

We find that in theory, and as regards right (at least with reference to this important question) the understanding between the two schools is much more cordial than we should have imagined. They differ only as to the legislative consequences to be deduced from the fact on which they agree. "Seeing that property is tainted with illegitimacy, inasmuch as it assigns to the proprietor a part of the remuneration to which he has no right; and seeing, at the same time, that it is necessary, let us respect it, but demand indemnities. No, say the Economists, although it is a monopoly, yet seeing that it is a necessary monopoly, let us respect it, and let it alone." And yet they urge this weak defence but feebly; for one of their latest organs, M. J. Garnier, adds, "You have reason on your side, as regards human right, but you are wrong practically, inasmuch as you have failed to point out the effects of a better system." To which the Socialists immediately reply, "We have found it; it is the Right to Employment—try it."

In the meantime, M. Proudhon steps in. You imagine, perhaps, that this redoubtable objector is about to question the premises on which the Economists and Socialists ground their agreement. Not at all. He can demolish Property without that. He appropriates the premises, grasps them, closes with them, and most logically deduces his conclusion. "You grant," he says, "that the gifts of God are possessed not only of utility but of *value*, and that these gifts the proprietor usurps and sells. Then Prop-

erty is theft; and it is not necessary to maintain it; it is not necessary to demand compensation for it; what *is* necessary is to *abolish* it."

M. Proudhon has brought forward many arguments against landed Property. The most formidable one—indeed the only formidable one—is that with which these authors have furnished him, by confounding utility with value.

"Who has the right," he asks, "to charge for the use of the soil,—for that wealth which does not proceed from man's act? Who is entitled to the rent of land? The producer of the land, without doubt. Who made it? God. Then, proprietor, begone.

". . . . But the Creator of the earth does not sell it—he gives it; and in giving it he shows no respect of persons. Why, then, among all his children, are some treated as eldest sons, and some as bastards? If equality of inheritance be our original right, why should our posthumous right be inequality of conditions?"

Replying to J. B. Say, who had compared land to an instrument, he says:

"I grant it, that land is an instrument; but who is the workman? Is it the proprietor? Is it he who, by the efficacious virtue of the right of property, communicates to it vigour and fertility? It is precisely here that we discover in what consists the monopoly of the proprietor,—he did not make the instrument, and he charges for its use. Were the Creator to present Himself and demand the rent of land, we must account for it to Him; but the proprietor, who represents himself as invested with the same power, ought to exhibit his procuration."

That is evident. The three systems in reality make only one. Economists, Socialists, Égalitaires, all direct against landed proprietors the same reproach, that of charging for what they have no right to charge for. This wrong some call *monopoly*, some *illegitimacy*, others *theft*—these are but different phases of the same complaint.

Now I would appeal to every intelligent reader whether this complaint is or is not well founded? Have I not demonstrated that there is but one thing which comes between the gifts of God and the hungry mouth, namely, human service?

Economists say, that "Rent is what we pay to the proprietor for the use of the productive and indestructible powers of the soil." I say, No—Rent is like what we pay to the water-carrier for the pains he has taken to construct his barrow, and the water would cost us more if he had carried it on his back. In the same way, corn, flax, wool, timber, meat, fruits, would have cost us more, if the proprietor had not previously improved the instrument which furnishes them.

Socialists assert that "originally the masses enjoyed their right to the land on condition of labour, but that now they are excluded and robbed of their natural patrimony." I answer, No—they are neither excluded nor robbed—they enjoy, gratuitously, the utility contributed by the soil on condition of labour, that is to say, by repaying that labour to those who have saved it to them.

Égalitaires allege that "the monopoly of the proprietor consists in this, that not having made the instrument, he yet charges for its use." I answer, No—the land-instrument, so far as it is the work of God, produces *utility*, and that utility is gratuitous; it is beyond the power of the proprietor to charge for it. The land-instrument, so far as it is prepared by the proprietor,—so far as he has laboured it, enclosed it, drained it, improved it, and furnished it with other necessary instruments, produces *value*, and that value represents actual human *services*, and for these alone is the proprietor paid. You must either admit the legitimacy of this demand, or reject your own principle—the *mutuality of services*.

In order to satisfy ourselves as to the true elements of the value of land, let us attend to the way in which landed property is formed—not by conquest and violence, but according to the laws of labour and exchange. Let us see what takes place in the United States.

Brother Jonathan, a laborious water-carrier of New York, set out for the Far-west, carrying in his purse a thousand dollars, the fruit of his labour and frugality.

He journeyed across many fertile provinces, where the soil, the sun, and the rain worked wonders, but which nevertheless *were entirely destitute of value* in the economical and *practical* sense of the word.

Being a little of a philosopher, he said to himself—"Let Adam Smith and Ricardo say what they will, *value* must *be something else than the natural and indestructible productive power of the soil.*"

At length, having reached the State of Arkansas, he found a beautiful property of about 100 acres, which the government had advertised for sale at the price of a dollar an acre.

A dollar an acre! he said—that is very little, almost nothing. I shall purchase this land, clear it, and sell the produce, and the drawer of water shall become a lord of the soil!

Brother Jonathan, being a merciless logician, liked to have a reason for everything. He said to himself, But why is this land

worth even a dollar an acre? No one has yet put a spade in it, or has bestowed on it the least labour. Can Smith and Ricardo, and the whole string of theorists down to Proudhon, be right after all? Can land have a value independent of all labour, all service, all human intervention? Must I admit that the productive and indestructible powers of the soil *have value?* In that case, why should they have no value in the countries through which I have passed? And, besides, since the powers of the soil surpass so enormously the powers of men, which, as Blanqui well remarks, can never go the length of creating the phenomena of germination, why should these marvellous powers be worth no more than a dollar?

But he was not long in perceiving that this value, like all other values, is of human and social creation. The American government demanded a dollar for the concession of each acre; but, on the other hand, it undertook to guarantee to a certain extent the security of the acquirer; it had formed in a rough way a road to the neighbourhood, facilitated the transmission of letters and newspapers, &c. Service for service, said Jonathan;—the government makes me pay a dollar, but it gives me an adequate equivalent. With deference to Ricardo, I can now account naturally for the value of this land, which value would be still greater if the road were extended and improved, the post more frequent and regular, and the protection more efficacious and secure.

While Jonathan argued, he worked; for we must do him the justice to say that he always made thinking and acting keep pace.

He expended the remainder of his dollars in buildings, enclosures, clearances, trenching, draining, improving, &c.; and after having dug, laboured, sowed, harrowed, reaped, at length came the time to dispose of his crop. "Now I shall see," said Jonathan, still occupied with the problem of value, "if in becoming a landed proprietor I have transformed myself into a monopolist, a privileged aristocrat, a plunderer of my neighbour, an engrosser of the bounties of divine Providence."

He carried his grain to market, and began to talk with a Yankee:—Friend, said he, how much will you give me for this Indian corn?

The current price, replied the other.

The current price! but will that yield me anything beyond the interest of my capital and the wages of my labour?

I am a merchant, said the Yankee, and I know that I must content myself with the recompense of my present and former labour.

And I was content with it when I was a mere drawer of water, replied the other, but now I am a landed proprietor. The English and French Economists have assured me that in that character I ought, over and above the double remuneration you point at, to derive a profit from the *productive and indestructible powers of the soil*, and levy a tax on the gifts of God.

The gifts of God belong to all, said the merchant. I avail myself of the *productive power* of the wind for propelling my ships, but I make no one pay for it.

Still, as far as I am concerned, I expect that you will pay me something for these powers, in order that Messieurs Senior, Considérant, and Proudhon, should not call me a monopolist and usurper for nothing. If I am to have the disgrace, I may at least have the profit, of a monopolist.

In that case, friend, I must bid you good-morning. To obtain the maize I am in quest of, I must apply to other proprietors, and if I find them of your mind, I shall cultivate it for myself.

Jonathan then understood the truth, that, under the empire of freedom, a man cannot be a monopolist at pleasure. As long as there are lands in the Union to clear, said he, I can never be more than the simple setter in motion of these famous *productive and indestructible forces*. I shall be paid for my trouble, that is all, just as when I was a drawer of water I was paid for my own labour, and not for that of nature. I see now very clearly that the true usufructuary of the gifts of God is not the man who raises the corn, but the man who consumes it.

Some years afterwards, another enterprise having engaged the attention of Jonathan, he set about finding a tenant for his land. The dialogue which took place between the two contracting parties was curious, and would throw much light on the subject under consideration were I to give it entire.

Here is part of it:

Proprietor. What! you would give me no greater rent than the interest, at the current rate, of the capital I have actually laid out?

Farmer. Not a cent more.

Proprietor. Why so, pray?

Farmer. Just for this reason, that, with the outlay of an equal capital, I can put as much land in as good condition as yours.

Proprietor. That seems conclusive. But consider that when you become my tenant, it is not only my capital which will work for you, but also *the productive and indestructible powers of the soil.* You will have enlisted in your service the marvellous influences of the sun and the moon, of affinity and electricity. Am I to give you all these things for nothing?

Farmer. Why not, since they cost you nothing, and since you derive nothing from them, any more than I do?

Proprietor. Derive nothing from them? I derive everything from them. Zounds! without these admirable phenomena, all my industry could not raise a blade of grass.

Farmer. Undoubtedly. But remember the Yankee you met at market. He would not give you a farthing for all this co-operation of nature any more than, when you were a water-carrier, the housewives of New York would give you a farthing for the admirable elaboration by means of which nature supplied the spring.

Proprietor. Ricardo and Proudhon, however, ...

Farmer. A fig for Ricardo. We must either treat on the basis which I have laid down, *or I shall proceed to clear land* alongside yours, where the sun and the moon will work for me gratis.

It was always the same argument, and Jonathan began to see that God had wisely arranged so as to make it difficult for man to intercept his gifts.

Disgusted with the trade of proprietor, Jonathan resolved to employ his energies in some other department, and he determined to put up his land to *sale.*

It is needless to say that no one would give him more for it than it cost himself. In vain he cited Ricardo, and represented the inherent value of the indestructible powers of the soil—the answer always was, "There are other lands close by;" and these few words put an extinguisher on his exactions and on his illusions.

There is, moreover, in this transaction a fact of great Economic importance, and to which little attention has been paid.

It is easy to understand that if a manufacturer desires, after ten or fifteen years, to sell his apparatus and materials, even in their new state, he will probably be forced to submit to a loss. The reason is obvious. Ten or fifteen years can scarcely elapse without considerable improvements in machinery taking place. This is the reason why the man who sends to market machinery fifteen years old cannot expect a return exactly equal to the labour he has expended; for with an equal expenditure of labour the pur-

chaser could, owing to the progress subsequently made, procure himself machinery of improved construction — which, we may remark in passing, proves more and more clearly that value is not in proportion to labour, but to services.

Hence we may conclude that machinery and instruments of labour have a tendency to lose part of their value in consequence of the mere lapse of time, without taking into account their deterioration by use—and we may lay down this formula, that "*one of the effects of progress is to diminish the value of all existing instruments.*"

It is clear in fact that the more rapid that progress is, the greater difficulty will the former instruments have in sustaining the rivalry of new and improved ones.

I shall not stop here to remark the harmony exhibited by the results of this law. What I desire you to observe at present is, that landed property no more escapes from the operation of this law than any other kind of property.

Brother Jonathan experiences this. He holds this language to the purchaser—"What I have expended on this property in permanent improvements represents a thousand days' labour. I expect that you will, in the first place, reimburse me for these thousand days' work, and then add something for the value which is inherent in the soil and independent of all human exertion."

The purchaser replies:

In the first place, I shall give you nothing for the value inherent in the soil, which is simply utility, which the adjoining property possesses as well as yours. Such native superhuman utility I can obtain gratis, which proves that it possesses no value.

In the second place, since your books show that you have expended a thousand days' work in bringing your land to its present state, I shall give you only 800 days' labour; and my reason for it is, that with 800 days' labour I can now-a-days accomplish the same improvements on the adjoining land as you have executed with 1000 days' labour on yours. Pray consider that in the course of fifteen years the art of draining, clearing, building, sinking wells, designing farm-offices, transporting materials, has made great progress. Less labour is now required to effect each given result, and I cannot consent to give you ten for what I can get for eight, more especially as the price of grain has fallen in proportion to this progress, which is a profit neither to you nor to me, but to mankind at large."

Thus Jonathan was left no alternative but to sell his land at a loss, or to keep it.

Undoubtedly the value of land is not affected by one circumstance exclusively. Other circumstances—such as the construction of a canal, or the erection of a town—may act in an opposite direction, and raise its value; but the improvements of which I have spoken, which are general and inevitable, always necessarily tend to depress it.

The conclusion to be deduced from all I have said is, that as long as there exists in a country abundance of land to be cleared and brought under cultivation, the proprietor, whether he cultivates, or lets, or sells it, enjoys no privilege, no monopoly, no exceptional advantage,—above all, that he levies no tax upon the gratuitous liberality of nature. How could it be so, if we suppose men to be free? Have not people who are possessed of capital and energy a perfect right to make a choice between agriculture, manufactures, commerce, fisheries, navigation, the arts, or the learned professions? Will not capital and industry always tend to those departments which give extraordinary returns? Will they not desert those which entail loss? Is this inevitable shifting and redistribution of human efforts not sufficient to establish, according to our hypothesis, an equilibrium of profit and remuneration? Do agriculturists in the United States make fortunes more rapidly than merchants, shipowners, bankers, or physicians,—as would necessarily happen if they received the wages of their labour like other people, and the recompense of nature's work into the bargain?

Would you like to know how a proprietor even in the United States could establish for himself a monopoly? I shall try to explain it.

Suppose Jonathan to assemble all the proprietors of the United States, and hold this language to them:

"I desired to sell my crops, and I found no one who would give me a high enough price for them. I wished then to let my land, and encountered the same difficulty. I resolved to sell it, but still experienced the same disappointment. My exactions have always been met by their telling me, that *there is more land in the neighbourhood;* so that, horrible to say, my services are estimated by the community, like the services of other people, *at what they are worth*, in spite of the flattering promises of theorists. They will give me nothing, absolutely nothing, for those productive and indestructible powers of the soil, for those natural agents, for the

solar and lunar rays, for the rain, the wind, the dew, the frost, which I was led to believe were mine, but of which I turn out to be only the nominal proprietor. Is it not an iniquitous thing that I am remunerated only for my services, and at a rate, too, reduced by competition? You are all suffering under the same oppression, you are all alike the victims of anarchical competition. It would be no longer so, you may easily perceive, if we *organized* landed property, if we laid our heads together to prevent anyone henceforward from clearing a yard of American soil. In that case, population pressing, by its increase, on a nearly fixed amount of subsistence, we should be able to make our own prices and attain immense wealth, which would be a great boon for all other classes; for being rich, we should provide them with work."

If, in consequence of this discourse, the combined proprietors seized the reins of government, and passed an act interdicting all new clearances, the consequence undoubtedly would be a temporary increase of their profits. I say temporary, for the natural laws of society would be wanting in harmony if the punishment of such a crime did not spring naturally from the crime itself. Speaking with scientific exactitude, I should not say that the new law we have supposed would impart value to the powers of the soil, or to natural agents (were this the case, the law would do harm to no one);—but I should say, that the equilibrium of services had been violently upset; that one class robbed all other classes, and that slavery had been introduced into that country.

Take another hypothesis, which indeed represents the actual state of things among the civilized nations of Europe—and suppose all the land to have passed into the domain of private property.

We are to inquire whether in that case the mass of consumers, or the *community*, would continue to be the gratuitous usufructuary of the productive powers of the soil, and of natural agents; whether the proprietors of land would be owners of anything else than of its *value*, that is to say, of their services fairly estimated according to the laws of competition; and whether, when they are recompensed for those services, they are not forced like everyone else to give the gifts of God into the bargain.

Suppose, then, the entire territory of Arkansas alienated by the government, parcelled into private domains, and subjected to culture. When Jonathan brings his grain or his land to market, can he not now take advantage of the productive power of the soil, and make it an element of value? He could no longer be

met, as in the preceding case, with the overwhelming answer, "There is more uncultivated land adjacent to yours."

This new state of things presupposes an increase of population, which may be divided into two classes: 1st, That which furnishes to the community agricultural services; 2dly, That which furnishes manufacturing, intellectual, or other services.

Now this appears to me quite evident. Labourers (other than owners of land) who wished to procure supplies of grain, being perfectly free to apply either to Jonathan or to his neighbours, or to the proprietors of adjoining states, being in circumstances even to proceed to clear lands beyond the territory of Arkansas, it would be absolutely impossible for Jonathan to impose an unjust law upon them. The very fact that lands which have no value exist elsewhere would oppose to monopoly an invincible obstacle, and we should be landed again in the preceding hypothesis. Agricultural services are subject to the law of Universal Competition, and it is quite impossible to make them pass for more than they *are worth.* I add, that they are worth no more (*cæteris paribus*) than services of any other description. As the manufacturer, after charging for his time, his anxiety, his trouble, his risk, his advances, his skill (all which things constitute human service, and are represented by value), can demand no recompense for the law of gravitation, the expansibility of steam, the assistance of which he has availed himself of,—so in the same way, Jonathan can include in the value of his grain only the sum total of the personal services, anterior or recent, and not the assistance he has derived from the laws of vegetable physiology. The equilibrium of services is not impaired so long as they are freely exchanged, the one for the other, at an agreed price; and the gifts of God, of which these services are the vehicle, given on both sides into the bargain, remain in the domain of community.

It may be said, no doubt, that in point of fact the value of the soil is constantly increasing; and this is true. In proportion as population becomes more dense and the people more wealthy, and the means of communication more easy, the landed proprietor derives more advantage from his services. Is this law peculiar to him? Does the same thing not hold of all other producers? With equal labour, does not a physician, a lawyer, a singer, a painter, a day-labourer, procure a greater amount of enjoyments in the nineteenth than he could in the fourth century? in Paris than in Brittany? in France than in Morocco? But is this increased

enjoyment obtained at the expense of any other body? That is the point. For the rest, we shall investigate still farther this law of value (using the word metonymically) of the soil, in a subsequent part of the work, when we come to consider the theory of Ricardo.

At present it is sufficient to show that Jonathan, in the case we have put, can exercise no oppression over the industrial classes, provided the exchange of services is free, and that labour can, without any legal impediment, be distributed, either in Arkansas or elsewhere, among different kinds of production. This liberty renders it impossible for the proprietors to intercept, for their own profit, the gratuitous benefits of nature.

It would no longer be the same thing if Jonathan and his brethren, availing themselves of their legislative powers, were to proscribe or shackle the liberty of trade,—were they to decree, for example, that not a grain of foreign corn should be allowed to enter the territory of Arkansas. In that case the value of services exchanged between proprietors and non-proprietors would no longer be regulated by justice. The one party could no longer control the pretensions of the other. Such a legislative measure would be as iniquitous as the one to which we have just alluded. The effect would be quite the same as if Jonathan, having carried to market a sack of corn, which in other circumstances would have sold for fifteen francs, should present a pistol at the purchaser's head, and say, Give me three francs more, or I will blow out your brains.

This (to give the thing its right name) is *extortion*. *Brutal* or *legal*, the character of the transaction is the same. Brutal, as in the case of the pistol, it violates property; legal, as in the case of the prohibition, it still violates property, and repudiates, moreover, the very principle upon which property is founded. The exclusive subject of property, as we have seen, is value, and Value is the appreciation of two services freely and voluntarily exchanged. It is impossible, then, to conceive anything more directly antagonistic to the very principle of property, than that which, in the name of right, destroys the equivalence of services.

It may not be out of place to add, that laws of this description are iniquitous and injurious, whatever may be the opinions entertained by those who impose them, or by those who are oppressed by their operation. In certain countries we find the working-classes standing up for these restrictions, because they enrich the proprietors. They do not perceive that it is at their expense, and I know from experience that it is not always safe to tell them so.

Strange! that people should listen willingly to sectaries who preach Communism, which is slavery; for when a man is no longer master of his own services, he is a slave;—and that they should look askance at those who are always and everywhere the defenders of Liberty, which is the Community of the gifts of God.

We now come to the third hypothesis, which assumes that all the land capable of cultivation throughout the world has passed into the domain of individual appropriation.

We have still to do with two classes—those who possess land —and those who do not. Will the first not oppress the second? and will the latter not be always obliged to give more labour in exchange for the same amount of subsistence?

I notice this objection merely for argument's sake, for hundreds of years must elapse before this hypothesis can become a reality.

Everything forewarns us, however, that the time must at last come when the exactions of proprietors can no longer be met by the words, There are other lands to clear.

I pray the reader to remark, that this hypothesis implies another —it implies that at the same epoch population will have reached the extreme limit of the means of subsistence which the earth can afford.

This is a new and important element in the question. It is very much as if one should put the question, What will happen when there is no longer enough of oxygen in the atmosphere to supply the lungs of a redundant population?

Whatever view we take of the principle of population, it is at least certain that population is capable of *increase*, nay, that it has a *tendency* to increase, since in point of fact it does increase. All the economic arrangements of society appear to have been organized with the previous knowledge of this tendency, and are in perfect harmony with it. The landed proprietor always endeavours to get paid for the natural agents which he has appropriated, but he is as constantly foiled in this foolish and unjust pretension by the abundance of analogous natural agents which have not been appropriated. The liberality of nature, which is comparatively indefinite, constitutes him a simple custodier. But now you drive me into a corner, by supposing a period at which this liberality reaches its limit. Men have then no longer anything to expect from that quarter. The consequence is inevitable, that the tendency of mankind to increase will be paralyzed, that the progress of population will be arrested. No economic régime can obviate

this necessity. According to the hypothesis we have laid down, every increase of population would be repressed by mortality. No philanthropy, no optimism, can make us believe that the increase of human beings can continue its progression when the progressive increase of subsistence has conclusively terminated.

Here, then, we have a new order of things; and the harmony of the social laws might be called in question, had they not provided for a state of matters the existence of which is possible, although very different from that which now obtains.

The difficulty we have to deal with, then, comes to this: When a ship in mid-ocean cannot reach land in less than a month, and has only a fortnight's provisions on board, what is to be done? Clearly this, reduce the allowance of each sailor. This is not cruelty—it is prudence and justice.

In the same way, when population shall have reached the extreme limit that all the land in the world can maintain, a law which, by gentle and infallible means prevents the further multiplication of mankind, cannot be considered either harsh or unjust. Now, it is landed property still which affords us a solution of the difficulty. The institution of property, by applying the stimulant of self-interest, causes the land to produce the greatest possible quantity of subsistence, and by the division of inheritances puts each family in a situation to estimate the danger to itself of an imprudent multiplication. It is very clear that any other régime —Communism, for example—would be at once a less effective spur to production, and a less powerful curb to population.

After all, it appears to me that Political Economy has discharged her duty when she has proved that the great and just law of the *mutuality of services* operates harmoniously, so long as human progress is not conclusively arrested. Is it not consoling to think that up to that point, and under the empire of freedom, it is not in the power of one class to oppress another? Is economic Science bound to solve this further problem: Given the tendency of mankind to multiply, what will take place when there is no longer room in the world for new inhabitants? Does God hold in reserve for that epoch some creative cataclysm, some marvellous manifestation of His almighty power? Or, as Christians, do we believe in the doctrine of the world's destruction? These evidently are not economical problems, and there is no science which does not encounter similar difficulties. Natural philosophers know well, that all bodies which move on the surface of the earth

have a tendency to descend, not to ascend. After all, a day must come when the mountains shall have filled up the valleys, when the embouchure of our rivers will be on the same level as their source, when the waters can no longer flow, &c. &c. What will happen then? Is Natural Science to cease to observe and to admire the harmony of the actual world, because she cannot divine by what other harmony God will provide for a state of things far distant no doubt, but inevitable? It seems to me that at this point the Economist, like the natural philosopher, should substitute for an exercise of curiosity an exercise of faith. He who has so marvellously arranged the medium in which we now live, knows best how to prepare another medium suitable to other circumstances.

We judge of the productiveness of the soil and of human skill by the facts of which we are witnesses. Is this a rational mode of proceeding? Then, adopting it, we may say, Since it has required six thousand years to bring a tenth-part of the earth to the sorry state of cultivation in which we find it, how many hundreds of ages must elapse before its entire surface shall be converted into a garden?

Yet in this appreciation, comforting as it is, we suppose merely the more general diffusion of our present knowledge, or rather our present ignorance, of agriculture. But is this, I repeat, an admissible rule? Does not analogy tell us that an impenetrable veil conceals from us the power—the indefinite power it may be—of art? The savage who lives by the chase requires a square league of territory. What would be his surprise were he told that the pastoral life enables ten times the number of men to subsist upon the same space? The nomad shepherd would, in like manner, be quite astonished to be told that a system of triennial cultivation [*la culture triennale*] admits easily of a population ten times greater still. Tell the peasant accustomed to this routine that the same progress will again be the result of alternate culture* [*la culture alterne*], and he will not believe you. Alternate culture is for us the latest improvement—Is it the latest improvement for the human race? Let us comfort ourselves regarding the future destiny of the species—a long tract of ages is before us. At all events, let us not require Political Economy to resolve problems which are not within her domain—and let us with confidence com-

* *Alterner un champ*, is to rear alternate crops of corn and hay in a field. —TRANSLATOR.

mit the destinies of future races to the keeping of that great and good and wise Being who shall have called them into existence.

Let us recapitulate the ideas contained in this chapter.

These two phenomena, Utility and Value—the co-operation of nature and the co-operation of man, consequently Community and Property—are combined in the work of agriculture, as in every other department of industry.

In the production of corn which appeases our hunger, we remark something analogous to what takes place in the formation of water which quenches our thirst. The ocean, which is the theme of the poet's inspiration, offers to the Economist also a fine subject of meditation. It is this vast reservoir which gives drink to all human creatures. And yet how can that be, when many of them are situated at a great distance from its shores, and when its water is besides undrinkable? It is here that we have to admire the marvellous industry of nature. We mark how the sun warms the heaving mass, and subjects it to a slow evaporation. The water takes the form of gas, and, disengaged from the salt, which rendered it unfit for use, it rises into the high regions of the atmosphere. Gales of wind, increasing in all directions, drift it towards inhabited continents. There it encounters cold, which condenses it, and attaches it in a solid form to the sides of mountains. By and by, the gentle heat of spring melts it. Carried along by its weight, it is filtered and purified through beds of schist and gravel. It ramifies and distributes itself, and supplies and feeds refreshing springs in all parts of the world. Here we have an immense and ingenious industry carried on by nature for the benefit of the human race. Change of form, change of place, utility, nothing is wanting. But where is *value?* Value has not yet come into existence; and if what we must call the work of God is to be paid for (it would be paid for if it possessed exchangeable *value*) — who could tell the *value* of a single drop of this precious liquid?

All men, however, have not a spring of pure water at their door. In order to quench their thirst, they must take pains, make efforts, exert foresight and skill. It is this *supplementary* human labour which gives rise to arrangements, transactions, *estimates*. It is here, then, that we discover the origin and foundation of value.

Man is originally ignorant. Knowledge is acquired. At the beginning, then, he is forced to carry water, to accomplish the supplementary labour which nature has left him to execute with

the *maximum* of trouble. It is at this stage that water has the greatest *value* in exchange. By degrees the water-carrier invents a barrow and wheels, trains horses, constructs pipes, discovers the law of the siphon, &c.; in short, he transfers part of his labour to the gratuitous forces of nature; and, in proportion as he does so, the value of water, but not its utility, is diminished.

There is here, however, a circumstance which it is necessary thoroughly to comprehend, if we would not see discordance where there is in reality only harmony. It is this, that the purchaser of water obtains it on easier terms, that is to say, gives a less amount of labour in exchange for a given quantity of it, each time that a step of progress of this kind is gained, although in such circumstances he has to give a remuneration for the instrument by means of which nature is constrained to act. Formerly he paid for the labour of carrying the water; now he pays not only for that, but for the labour expended in constructing the barrow, the wheel, and the pipe—and yet, *everything included*, he pays less; and this shows us how false and futile the reasoning is which would persuade us that that part of the remuneration which is applicable to capital is a burden on the consumer. Will these reasoners never understand that, for each result obtained, capital supersedes more labour than it exacts?

All that I have said is equally applicable to the production of corn. In that case also, anterior to all human labour, there has been an immense, a measureless, amount of natural industry at work, the secrets of which the most advanced science can yet give no account of. Gases, salts, are diffused through the soil and the atmosphere. Electricity, affinity, the wind, the rain, light, heat, vegetable life, play successively their parts, often unknown to us, in transporting, transforming, uniting, dividing, combining these elements; and this marvellous industry, the activity and utility of which elude our appreciation and even our imagination, has yet no *value*. Value makes its appearance at the first intervention of the labour of man, who has, in this, more perhaps than in the other instance we have given, a *supplementary* labour to perform, in order to complete what nature has begun.

To direct these natural forces, and remove the obstacles which impede their action, man takes possession of an instrument, which is the soil, and he does so without injury to anyone; for this instrument had previously no value. This is not a matter of argument, but a matter of fact. Show me, in any part of the world

you choose, land which has not been subjected directly or indirectly to human action, and I will show you land destitute of value.*

* On the subject of Rent, and the constituent elements of the Value of Land, Bastiat would seem to have adopted, though perhaps unconsciously, the theory of Mr Carey, in his able and original work on *The Principles of Political Economy* (Philadelphia, 1837-38). Practically, no doubt, Mr Carey's view of the subject to a great extent holds true. If we take into account all the labour and capital laid out in permanent ameliorations upon a field or a farm, from its first clearance to the present moment, it may be true that there is scarcely any land now under cultivation which is worth what it cost; and that the Rent yielded by such land, consequently, resolves itself into the remuneration of anterior labour. But the sweeping assertion of Bastiat, that "land which has not been subjected, directly or indirectly, to human action is everywhere destitute of value," is certainly not correct as a "matter of fact;" for from the spot where I am now writing, I can see thousands of acres which have never since the creation had a spade, or a plough, or a human hand applied to them, which nevertheless do yield a Rent—a small rent, a shilling, a penny, an acre, it may be—but a return which can by no process of analysis be resolved into the remuneration of anterior labour or capital. With regard to such land, the question of rent or no rent would seem to depend on the current and usual rate of profits.

Land in its natural state, and without cultivation, is capable of producing grass for the food of cattle, and other products capable of rendering service to man. Suppose, for example, that the agriculture of a country has reached the least productive corn-land, which yields a return of £120 for each £100 of capital employed in its cultivation, and that much of the remaining land is incapable of cultivation, —a tract of moorland, or rough pasture, for instance, like some parts of the Highlands of Scotland. Whether such land will or will not yield a rent must depend on whether the return, in sheep, cattle, copsewood, or other produce, after replacing the capital employed, exceeds or falls short of 20 per cent.

Suppose that a person possessed of a capital equal to £100, instead of applying that capital to the cultivation of the least productive corn-land, with a return equal to £120, employs his £100 in purchasing, tending, and bringing to market 100 sheep, —if the annual produce and increase of his flock, over and above his necessary outgoings, amounts only to 10 per cent. on his capital, of course he will find the rearing of sheep unprofitable, and give up the trade. He can in that case pay no rent, for his return is not equal to even the ordinary profits. But if the increase of his flock, over and above his outgoings, amounts to 30 per cent. on the capital employed, then the land to which we refer will yield a rent equal to 10 per cent. on that capital. Whether this shall be the rent of 10, of 50, or 100, or 1000 acres of land, depends entirely on how much land is required to feed 100 sheep; the greater the extent of land, the less will be the rent of each acre; it may be a pound, or a shilling, or a penny an acre; still every acre, and every part of every acre, will yield a *rent*. Nor does the question of rent or no rent depend on the amount of the capital employed; for if a capital of £100 employed on 10,000 acres of land yields a clear return of £130 when profits are at 20 per cent., the surplus £10 clearly constitutes rent. Rent depends on the ratio of the product to the capital employed, and if that product, or its value, exceed the capital, or its value, by more than the ordinary rate of profits, a rent, greater or less in amount, according to the value of the capital and the extent of surface over which that capital is spread, will be yielded by every inch of land capable of giving nourishment to a blade of grass.

On a searching analysis of rent, then, we always find a *residuum* which cannot

In the meantime, the agriculturist, in order to effect, in conjunction with nature, the production of corn, executes two kinds of labour which are quite distinct. The one kind is applicable directly and immediately to the crop of the year—is applicable only to that, and must be paid for by that—such as sowing, weeding, reaping, &c. The other, as building, clearing, draining, enclosing, is applicable to an indefinite series of crops, and must be charged to and spread over a course of years, and calculated according to the tables of interest and annuities. The crops constitute the remuneration of the agriculturist if he consumes them himself. If he exchanges them, it is for services of another kind, and the appreciation of the services so exchanged constitutes their value.

Now it is easy to see that this class of permanent works executed by the agriculturist upon the land is a *value* which has not yet received its entire recompense, but which cannot fail to receive it. It cannot be supposed that he is to throw up his land and allow another to step into his shoes without compensation. The value has been incorporated and mixed up with the soil, and this is the reason why we can with propriety employ a metonymy and say *the land has value.* It has value, in fact, because it can be no longer acquired without giving in exchange the equivalent for this labour. But what I contend for is, that this land, on which its natural productive power had not originally conferred any value, has no value yet in this respect. This natural power, which was gratuitous then, is gratuitous now, and will be always gratuitous. We may say, indeed, that the land has *value,* but when we go to the root of the matter we find, that what possesses value is the human

be resolved into the remuneration of anterior labour or capital; and as the value of land in its natural and uncultivated state depends on the amount of this residuum, or rent, if that value is to be brought within the limits of Bastiat's theory, we must apply to it the same principle which he applied (Chap. V., pp. 113, 114 *ante*) to the case of a diamond found by accident, and resolve it, not into service rendered by undergoing labour, or *making an effort*, for another, but into service rendered by *saving* another from undergoing the labour or making the effort for himself. Bastiat seems to have felt this as he approached the conclusion of the present chapter. (See *post*, p. 256.)

In this part of his work, Bastiat, in his desire to refute the fallacies of the Socialists and Communists on the subject of property, seems to have gone beyond the proper domain of Political Economy; for in strictness it is not the business of that science to vindicate the institution of property, or to explain its origin. It is enough for the Economist that property *exists*, and all that he is concerned to do is to explain the laws which regulate the production, distribution, and consumption of wealth.—TRANSLATOR.

labour which has improved the land, and the capital which has been expended on it. Hence it is rigorously exact to say that the proprietor of the land is, after all, the proprietor only of a value which he has created, of services which he has rendered; and what property can be more legitimate? It is property created at no one's expense, and neither intercepts nor taxes the gifts of God.

Nor is this all. The capital which has been advanced, and the interest of which is spread over the crop of successive years, is so far from increasing the price of the produce, and forming a burden on the consumers, that the latter acquire agricultural products cheaper in proportion as this capital is augmented, that is to say, in proportion as the value of the soil is increased. I have no doubt that this assertion will be thought paradoxical and tainted with exaggerated optimism, so much have people been accustomed to regard the value of land as a calamity, if not a piece of injustice. For my own part, I affirm, that it is not enough to say that the value of the soil has been created at no one's expense; it is not enough to say that it injures no one; we should rather say that it benefits everybody. It is not only legitimate, but advantageous, even to those who possess no property.

We have here, in fact, the phenomenon of our previous illustration reproduced. We remarked that from the moment the water-carrier invented the barrow and the wheel, the purchaser of the water had to pay for two kinds of labour: 1st, The labour employed in making the barrow and the wheel, or rather the interest of the capital, and an annual contribution to a sinking fund to replace that capital when worn out; 2d, The direct labour which the water-carrier must still perform. But it is equally true that these two kinds of labour united do not equal in amount the labour which had to be undergone before the invention. Why? because a portion of the work has now been handed over to the gratuitous forces of nature. It is, indeed, in consequence of this diminution of human labour that the invention has been called forth and adopted.

All this takes place in exactly the same way in the case of land and the production of corn. As often as an agriculturist expends capital in permanent ameliorations, it is certain that the successive crops are burdened with the interest of that capital. But it is equally certain that the other species of labour—rude, unskilled, present, direct labour—is rendered unnecessary in a still greater proportion; so that each crop is obtained by the proprietor, and consequently by the consumer, on easier terms, on less onerous

conditions—the proper action of capital consisting precisely in substituting natural and gratuitous co-operation for human labour which must be paid for.

Here is an example of it. In order to obtain a good crop, it is necessary that the field should be freed from superfluous moisture. Suppose this species of labour to be still included in the first category. Suppose that the cultivator goes every morning with a jar to carry off the stagnant water where it is productive of injury. It is clear that at the year's end the land would have acquired no additional *value*, but the price of the grain would be enormously enhanced. It would be the same in the case of all those who followed the same process while the art of draining was in this primitive state. If the proprietor were to make a drain, that moment the land would acquire *value*, for this labour pertains to the second category—that which is incorporated with the land—and must be reimbursed by the products of consecutive years; and no one could expect to acquire the land without recompensing this work. Is it not true, however, that it would tend to lower the value of the crop? Is it not true that although during the first year it exacted an extraordinary exertion, it saves in the long-run more labour than it has occasioned? Is it not true that the draining thenceforth will be executed by the gratuitous law of hydrostatics more economically than it could be by muscular force? Is it not true that the purchasers of corn will benefit by this operation? Is it not true that they should esteem themselves fortunate in this new value acquired by the soil? And, having reference to more general considerations, is it not true, in fine, that the value of the soil attests a progress realized, not for the advantage of the proprietor only, but for that of society at large? How absurd, then, and suicidal in society to exclaim: The additional price charged for corn, to meet the interest of the capital expended on this drain, and ultimately to replace that capital, or its equivalent, as represented in the value of the land, is a privilege, a monopoly, a theft! At this rate, to cease to be a monopolist and a thief, the proprietor should have only to fill up his drain, and betake himself to his jar. Would the man who has no property, and lives by wages, be any gainer by that?

Review all the permanent ameliorations of which the sum total makes up the value of land, and you will find that to each of them the same remark applies. Having filled up the drain, demolish the fence, and so force the agriculturist to mount guard upon his

field; destroy the well, pull down the barn, dig up the road, burn the plough, efface the levelling, remove the artificial mould; replace in the field the loose stones, the weeds, the roots of trees; you will then have realized the Utopia of Equality. The land, and the human race along with it, will have reverted to the primitive state, and will have no longer any value. The crops will have no longer any connexion with capital. Their price will be freed from that accursed element called interest. Everything, literally everything, will be done by actual labour, visible to the naked eye. Political Economy will be much simplified. Our country will support a man to the square league. The rest of her inhabitants will have died of hunger;—but then it can no longer be said that property is a monopoly, an injustice, and a theft.

Let us not be insensible, then, to those economic harmonies which unfold themselves to our view more and more as we analyze the ideas of exchange, of value, of capital, of interest, of property, of community.—Will it indeed be given me to describe the entire circle, and complete the demonstration?—But we have already, perhaps, advanced sufficiently far to be convinced that the social world, not less than the material world, bears the impress of a Divine hand, from which flows wisdom and goodness, and towards which we should raise our eyes in gratitude and admiration.

I cannot forbear reverting here to the view of this subject taken by M. Considérant.

Setting out with the proposition, that the soil has a proper value, independent of all human labour, that it constitutes *primitive and uncreated capital*, he concludes, in perfect consistency with his own views, that *appropriation* is *usurpation*. This supposed iniquity leads him to indulge in violent tirades against the institutions of modern society. On the other hand, he allows that permanent ameliorations confer an *additional value* on this primitive capital, an accessory so mixed up with the principal that we cannot separate them. What are we to do, then? for we have here a total value composed of two elements, of which one, the fruit of labour, is legitimate property; and the other, the gift of God, appropriated by man, is an iniquitous usurpation.

This is no trifling difficulty. M. Considérant resolves it by reference to the Right to Employment [*Droit au travail*].

"The development of Mankind evidently demands that the Soil shall not be left in its wild and uncultivated state. The destiny of the human race is opposed to property in land retaining *its rude and primitive form*.

"In the midst of forests and savannas, the savage enjoys four natural rights, namely, the rights of Hunting, of Fishing, of Gathering the fruits, of Pasturing. Such is the primitive form of property in land.

"In all civilized societies, the working-classes, the Prolétaires, who inherit nothing, and possess nothing, are simply despoiled of these rights. We cannot say that the primitive Right has changed its form, for it no longer exists. The form and the substance have alike disappeared.

"Now in what Form can such Rights be reconciled with the conditions of an industrial Society? The answer is plain:

"In the savage state, in order to avail himself of his Right, man is *obliged to act*. The *labour* of Fishing, of Hunting, of Gathering, of Pasturing, are the conditions of the exercise of his Right. The primitive Right, then, is a Right *to engage in these employments*.

"Very well, let an industrial Society, which has appropriated the land, and taken away from man the power of exercising freely and at will his four natural Rights, let this society cede to the individual, in compensation for those Rights of which it has despoiled him, the *Right to Employment*. On this principle, rightly understood and applied, the individual has no longer any reason to complain.

"The condition *sine quâ non*, then, of the Legitimacy of Property is, that Society should concede to the Prolétaire—the man who has no property—the *Right to Employment;* and, in exchange for a given exertion of activity, *assure* him of means of subsistence, at least as adequate as such exercise *could* have procured him in the primitive state."

I cannot, without being guilty of tiresome repetition, discuss this question with M. Considérant in all its bearings. If I demonstrate, that what he terms *uncreated capital* is no capital at all; that what he terms the *additional value* of the soil, is not an additional value, but the *total value;* he must acknowledge that his argument has fallen to pieces, and, with it, all his complaints of the way in which mankind have judged it proper to live since the days of Adam. But this controversy would oblige me to repeat all that I have already said upon the essentially and indelibly gratuitous character of natural agents.

I shall only remark, that if M. Considérant speaks in behalf of the non-proprietary class, he is so very accommodating that they may think themselves betrayed. What! proprietors have usurped the soil, and all the miracles of vegetation which it displays! they have usurped the sun, the rain, the dew, oxygen, hydrogen, and azote, so far at least as these co-operate in the production of agricultural products—and you ask them to assure to the man who has no property, as a compensation, at least as much of the means of subsistence, in exchange for a given exertion of activity, as that exertion could have procured him in the primitive and savage state!

But do you not see that landed property has not waited for your injunctions in order to be a million times more generous? for to what is your demand limited?

In the primitive state, your four rights of fishing, hunting, gathering the fruits, and pasturing, maintain in existence, or rather in a state of vegetation, amid all the horrors of destitution, nearly one man to the square league of territory. The usurpation of the land will then be legitimate, according to you, when those who have been guilty of that usurpation support one man for every square league, exacting from him at the same time as much activity as is displayed by a Huron or an Iroquois. Pray remark, that France consists of only thirty thousand square leagues; that consequently, if its whole territory supports thirty thousand inhabitants in that condition of existence which the savage state affords, you renounce in behalf of the non-proprietary class all farther demands upon property. Now, there are thirty millions of Frenchmen who have not an inch of land, and among the number we meet with many—the president of the republic, ministers, magistrates, bankers, merchants, notaries, advocates, physicians, brokers, soldiers, sailors, professors, journalists, &c.—who would certainly not be disposed to exchange their condition for that of an Ioway. Landed property, then, must do much more for us than you exact from it. You demand from it the *Right to Employment*, up to a certain point—that is to say, until it yields to the masses—and in exchange for a given amount of labour too—as much subsistence as they could earn in a state of barbarism. Landed property does much more than that—it gives more than the Right to Employment—it gives Employment itself, and did it only clear the land-tax, it would do a hundred times more than you ask it to do.

I find to my great regret that I have not yet done with landed property and its value. I have still to state, and to refute, in as few words as possible, an objection which is specious and even formidable.

It is said,

"Your theory is contradicted by facts. Undoubtedly, as long as there is in a country abundance of uncultivated land, the existence of such land will of itself hinder the cultivated land from acquiring an undue value. It is also beyond doubt, that even when all the land has passed into the appropriated domain, if neighbouring nations have extensive tracts ready for the plough, freedom of trade is sufficient to restrain the value of landed property within just limits. In these two cases it would seem that the Price of land can only represent the capital advanced, and the Rent of

land the interest of that capital. Whence we must conclude, as you do, that the proper action of the soil and the intervention of natural agents, going for nothing, and not influencing the value of the crops, remain gratuitous, and therefore common. All this is specious. We may have difficulty in discovering the error, and yet this reasoning is erroneous. In order to be convinced of it, it is sufficient to point to the fact, that there are in France cultivated lands which are worth from 100 francs to 6000 francs the hectare, an enormous difference, which is much easier explained by the difference of fertility than by the difference of the anterior labour applied to these lands. It is vain to deny, then, that fertility has its own value, for not a sale takes place which does not attest it. Every one who purchases a land estate examines its quality, and pays for it accordingly. If, of two properties which lie alongside each other, the one consists of a rich alluvium, and the other of barren sand, the first is surely of more value than the second, although both may have absorbed the same capital, and to say truth, the purchaser gives himself no trouble on that score. His attention is fixed upon the future, and not upon the past. What he looks at is not what the land has cost, but what it will yield, and he knows that its yield will be in proportion to its fertility. Then this fertility has a proper and intrinsic value which is independent of all human labour. To maintain the contrary is to endeavour to base the legitimacy of individual appropriation on a subtilty, or rather on a paradox."

Let us inquire, then, what is the true foundation of the value of land.

I pray the reader not to forget that this question is of grave importance at the present moment. Hitherto it has been neglected or glossed over by Economists, as a question of mere curiosity. The legitimacy of individual appropriation was not formerly contested, but this is no longer the case. Theories which have obtained but too much success have created doubts in the minds of our best thinkers on the institution of property. And upon what do the authors of these theories found their complaints? Why, exactly upon the assertion contained in the objection which I have just explained—upon the fact, unfortunately admitted by all schools, that the soil, by reason of its fertility, possesses an inherent value communicated to it by nature and not by human means. Now value is not transferred gratuitously. The very word excludes the idea of gratuitousness. We say to the proprie-

tor, then—you demand from me a value which is the fruit of my labour, and you offer me in exchange a value which is not the fruit of your labour, or of any labour, but of the liberality of nature.

Be assured that this would be a fearful complaint were it well founded. It did not originate with Messieurs Considérant and Proudhon. We find it in the works of Smith, of Ricardo, of Senior, of all the Economists without exception, not as a theory merely, but as a subject of complaint. These authors have not only attributed to the soil an extra-human value, they have boldly deduced the consequence, and branded landed property as a privilege, a monopoly, a usurpation. No doubt, after thus branding it, they have defended it on the plea of *necessity*. But what does such a defence amount to, but an error of reasoning which the Communist logicians have lost no time in rectifying.

It is not, then, to indulge an unhappy love for subtilties that I enter on this delicate subject. I should have wished to save both the reader and myself the ennui which even now I feel hovering over the conclusion of this chapter.

The answer to the objection now under consideration is to be found in the theory of Value, explained in the *fifth* chapter of this work. I there said that value does not essentially imply labour; still less is it necessarily proportionate to labour. I have shown that the foundation of value is not so much the *pains taken* by the person who transfers it as the *pains saved* to the person who receives it; and it is for that reason that I have made it to reside in something which embraces these two elements—in *service*. I have said that a person may render a great service with very little effort, or that with a great effort one may render a very trifling service. The sole result is, that labour does not obtain necessarily a remuneration which is always in proportion to its intensity, in the case either of man in an isolated condition, or of man in the social state.

Value is determined by a bargain between two contracting parties. In making that bargain, each has his own views. You offer to sell me corn. What matters it to me the time and pains it may have cost you to produce it? What I am concerned about is the time and pains it would have cost me to procure it from another quarter. The knowledge you have of my situation may render you more or less exacting; the knowledge I have of yours may render me more or less anxious to make the purchase. There is no necessary measure, then, of the recompense which you are to

derive from your labour. That depends upon the circumstances, and the value which these circumstances confer upon the two services which we are desirous to exchange. By and by we shall call attention to an external force called Competition, whose mission is to regulate values, and render them more and more proportional to efforts. Still this proportion is not of the essence of value, seeing that the proportion is established under the pressure of a contingent fact.

Keeping this in view, I maintain that the value of land arises, fluctuates, and is determined, like that of gold, iron, water, the lawyer's advice, the physician's consultation, the singer's or dancer's performance, the artist's picture—in short, like all other values; that it is subject to no exceptional laws; that it constitutes a property the same in origin, the same in nature, and as legitimate, as any other property. But it does not at all follow, as you must now see, that, of two exertions of labour applied to the soil, one should not be much better remunerated than the other.

Let us revert again to that industry, the most simple of all, and the best fitted to show us the delicate point which separates the onerous labour of man from the gratuitous co-operation of nature. I allude to the humble industry of the water-carrier.

A man procures and brings home a barrel of water. Does he become possessed of a value necessarily proportionate to his labour? In that case, the value would be independent of the service the water may render. Nay more, it would be fixed; for the labour, once over, is no longer susceptible of increase or diminution.

Well, the day after he procures and brings home this barrel of water, it may lose its value, if, for example, it has rained during the night. In that case, every one is provided—the water can render no service, and is no longer wanted. In economic language, it has ceased to be in demand.

On the other hand, it may acquire considerable value, if extraordinary wants, unforeseen and pressing, come to manifest themselves.

What is the consequence? that man, working for the future, is not exactly aware beforehand what value the future will attach to his labour. Value incorporated in a material object will be higher or lower, according as it renders more or less service, or, to express it more clearly, human labour, which is the source of value, receives according to circumstances a higher or lower re-

muneration. Such eventualities are an exercise for foresight, and foresight also has a right to remuneration.

But what connexion is there, I would ask, between these fluctuations of value, between these variations in the recompense of labour, and that marvellous natural industry, those admirable physical laws, which without our participation have brought the water of the ocean to the spring. Because the value of this barrel of water varies according to circumstances, are we to conclude that nature charges sometimes more, sometimes less, sometimes nothing at all, for evaporation, for carrying the clouds from the ocean to the mountains, for freezing, melting, and the whole of that admirable industry which supplies the spring?

It is exactly the same thing in the case of agricultural products.

The value of the soil, or rather of the capital applied to the soil, is made up not of one element but of two. It depends not only on the labour which has been employed, but also on the ability which society possesses to remunerate that labour—on Demand as well as on Supply.

Take the case of a field. Not a year passes, perhaps, in which there is not some labour bestowed upon it, the effects of which are permanent, and of course an increase of value is the result.

Roads of access, besides, are improved and made more direct, the security of person and property becomes more complete, markets are extended, population increases in number and in wealth—different systems of culture are introduced, and a new career is opened to intelligence and skill; the effect of this change of medium, of this general prosperity, being to confer additional value on both the present and the anterior labour, and consequently on the field.

There is here no injustice, no exception in favour of landed property. No species of labour, from that of the banker to that of the day-labourer, fails to exhibit the same phenomenon. No one fails to see his remuneration improved by the improvement of the society in which his work is carried on. This action and reaction of the prosperity of each on the prosperity of all, and *vice versa*, is the very law of value. So false is the conclusion which imputes to the soil and its productive powers an imaginary value, that intellectual labour, professions and trades which have no connexion with matter or the co-operation of physical laws, enjoy the same advantage, which in fact is not exceptional but universal. The lawyer, the physician, the professor, the artist, the poet, receive a

higher remuneration for an equal amount of labour, in proportion as the town or country to which they belong increases in wealth and prosperity, in proportion as the taste or demand for their services becomes more generally diffused, in proportion as the public is more able and more willing to remunerate them. The acquisition of clients and customers is regulated by this principle. It is still more apparent in the case of the Basque Giant and Tom Thumb, who live by the simple exhibition of their exceptional stature, and reap a much better harvest, from the curiosity of the numerous and wealthy crowds of our large towns, than from that of a few poor and straggling villagers. In this case, demand not only enhances value, it creates it. Why, then, should we think it exceptional or unjust that demand should also exert an influence on the value of land and of agricultural products?

Is it alleged that land may thus attain an exaggerated value? They who say so have never reflected on the immense amount of labour which arable land has absorbed. I dare affirm, that there is not a field in this country which *is worth* what it has cost, which could be exchanged for as much labour as has been expended in bringing it to its present state of productiveness. If this observation is well founded, it is conclusive. It frees landed property from the slightest taint of injustice. For this reason, I shall return to the subject when I come to examine Ricardo's theory of Rent, and I shall show that we must apply to agricultural capital the law which I have stated in these terms: In proportion as capital increases, products are divided between capitalists or proprietors and labourers, in such a way that the *relative* share of the former goes on continually diminishing, although their *absolute* share is increased, whilst the share of the latter is increased both absolutely and relatively.

The illusion which has induced men to believe that the productive powers of the soil have an independent value, because they possess Utility, has led to many errors and catastrophes. It has driven them frequently to the premature establishment of colonies, the history of which is nothing else than a lamentable martyrology. They have reasoned in this way: In our own country we can obtain value only by labour, and when we have done our work, we have obtained a value which is only proportionate to our labour. If we emigrate to Guiana, to the banks of the Mississippi, to Australia, to Africa, we shall obtain possession of vast territories, uncultivated but fertile; and our reward will be, that we shall become possessed

not of the value we have created, but also of the inherent and independent value of the land we may reclaim. They set out, and a cruel experience soon confirms the truth of the theory which I am now explaining. They labour, they clear, they exhaust themselves; they are exposed to privations, to sufferings, to diseases; and then if they wish to dispose of the land which they have rendered fit for production, they cannot obtain for it what it has cost them, and they are forced to acknowledge that value is of human creation. I defy you to give me an instance of the establishment of a colony which has not at the beginning been attended with disaster.

"Upwards of a thousand labourers were sent out to the Swan River Colony; but the extreme cheapness of land (eighteenpence or less than two francs an acre), and the extravagant rate of wages, afforded them such facilities and inducements to become landowners, that capitalists could no longer get any one to cultivate their lands. A capital of £200,000 (five millions of francs) was lost in consequence, and the colony became a scene of desolation. The labourers having left their employers from the delusive desire to become landowners, agricultural implements were allowed to rust—seeds rotted—and sheep, cattle, and horses perished for want of attention. A frightful famine cured the labourers of their infatuation, and they returned to ask employment from the capitalists; but it was too late."—*Proceedings of the South Australian Association.*

The association, attributing this disaster to the cheapness of land, raised its price to 12s. an acre. But, adds Carey, from whom I borrow this quotation, the real cause was, that the labourers, being persuaded that land possesses an *inherent* value, apart from the labour bestowed on it, were anxious to exercise "the power of appropriation," to which the power to demand Rent is attributed.

What follows supplies us with an argument still more conclusive:

"In 1836, the landed estates in the colony of Swan River were to be purchased from the original settlers at one shilling an acre."—*New Monthly Magazine.*

Thus the land which was sold by the company at 12s.—upon which the settlers had bestowed much labour and money—was disposed of by them at one shilling! What then became of the value of *the natural and indestructible productive powers of the soil?**

I feel that the vast and important subject of the Value of Land has not been exhausted in this chapter, written by snatches and amid many distractions. I shall return to it hereafter; but in the mean time I cannot resist submitting one observation to my readers, and more especially to Economists.

The illustrious *savants* who have done so much to advance the science, whose lives and writings breathe benevolence and philan-

* Ricardo.

thropy, and who have disclosed to us, at least in a certain aspect, and within the limits of their researches, the true solution of the social problem—the Quesnays, the Turgots, the Smiths, the Malthuses, the Says—have not however escaped, I do not say from refutation, for that is always legitimate, but from calumny, disparagement, and insult. To attack their writings, and even their motives, has become fashionable. It may be said, perhaps, that in this chapter I am furnishing arms to their detractors, and truly the moment would be ill chosen for me to turn against those whom I candidly acknowledge as my initiators, my masters, and my guides.

But supreme homage is, after all, due to Truth, or what I regard as Truth. No book was ever written without some admixture of error. Now a single error in Political Economy, if we press it, torture it, deduce from it rigorously its logical consequences, involves all kinds of errors—in fact, lands us in chaos. There never was a book from which we could not extract one proposition, isolated, incomplete, false, including consequently a whole world of errors and confusion. In my conscience, I believe that the definition which the Economists have given of the word *Value* is of this number. We have just seen that this definition has led them to cast a serious doubt on the legitimacy of property in land, and, by consequence, in capital; and they have only been stopped short on this fatal road by an inconsistency. This inconsistency has saved them. They have resumed their march on the road of Truth; and their error, if it be one, is, in their works, an isolated blot. Then the Socialists have come to lay hold of this false definition, not to refute it, but to adopt it, strengthen it, make it the foundation of their propaganda, and deduce from it all its consequences. Hence has arisen in our day an imminent social danger; and it is for that reason that I have thought it my duty to be explicit on this subject, and trace the erroneous theory to its source. If you conclude that I have separated myself from my masters Smith and Say, from my friends Blanqui and Garnier, because, by an oversight in their learned and admirable works, they have made, as I think, an erroneous application of the word *value;* if you conclude from this that I have no longer faith in Political Economy and Political Economists, I can only protest, and appeal to the very title of the present volume.

X.

COMPETITION.

THERE is not in the whole vocabulary of Political Economy a word which has roused the fury of modern reformers so much as the word *Competition*, which, in order to render it the more odious, they never fail to couple with the epithet *anarchical*.

What is the meaning of *anarchical competition?* I really don't know. What could we substitute for it? I am equally ignorant.

I hear people, indeed, calling out *Organization! Association!* What does that mean? Let us come to an understanding, once for all. I desire to know what sort of authority these writers intend to exercise over me, and all other living men; for I acknowledge only one species of authority, that of reason, if indeed they have it on their side. Is it their wish, then, to deprive me of the right of exercising my judgment on what concerns my own subsistence? Is their object to take from me the power of comparing the services which I render with those which I receive? Do they mean that I should act under the influence of restraint, exerted over me by them and not by my own intelligence? If they leave me my liberty, Competition remains. If they deprive me of freedom, I am their slave. Association will be *free and voluntary*, they say. Be it so. But then each group of associates will, as regards all other groups, be just what individuals now are in relation to each other, and we shall still have *Competition*. The association will be *integral*. A good joke truly. What! Anarchical Competition is now desolating society, and we must wait for a remedy, until, by dint of your persuasion, all the nations of the earth—Frenchmen, Englishmen, Chinese, Japanese, Caffres, Hottentots, Laplanders, Cossacks, Patagonians—make up their minds to unite in one of the forms of association which you have devised? Why, this is just to avow that Competition is indestructible; and will you venture to say that a phenomenon which

is indestructible, and consequently providential, can be mischievous?

After all, what is Competition? Is it a thing which exists and is self-acting like the cholera? No, Competition is only the absence of constraint. In what concerns my own interest, I desire to choose for myself, not that another should choose for me, or in spite of me—that is all. And if any one pretends to substitute his judgment for mine in what concerns me, I should ask to substitute mine for his in what concerns him. What guarantee have we that things would go on better in this way? It is evident that Competition is Liberty. To take away the liberty of acting is to destroy the possibility, and consequently the power, of choosing, of judging, of comparing; it is to annihilate intelligence, to annihilate thought, to annihilate man. From whatever quarter they set out, to this point all modern reformers tend—to ameliorate society they begin by annihilating the individual, under the pretext that all evils come from this source—as if all good did not come from it too.

We have seen that services are exchanged for services. In reality, every man comes into the world charged with the responsibility of providing for his satisfactions by his efforts. When another man saves us an effort, we ought to save him an effort in return. He imparts to us a satisfaction resulting from his effort; we ought to do the same for him.

But who is to make the comparison? for between these efforts, these pains, these services exchanged, there is necessarily a comparison to be made, in order to arrive at equivalence, at justice; —unless indeed injustice, inequality, chance, is to be our rule, which would just be another way of putting human intelligence *hors de cause.* We must, then, have a judge; and who is this judge to be? Is it not quite natural that in every case wants should be judged of by those who experience them, satisfactions by those who seek them, efforts by those who exchange them? And is it seriously proposed to substitute for this universal vigilance of the parties interested, a social authority (suppose that of the reformer himself), charged with determining in all parts of the world the delicate conditions of these countless acts of interchange? Do you not see that this would be to set up the most fallible, the most universal, the most arbitrary, the most inquisitorial, the most insupportable—we are fortunately able to add, the most impossible—of all despotisms ever conceived in the brain of pasha or mufti?

It is sufficient to know that Competition is nothing else than the absence of an arbitrary authority as judge of exchanges, in order to be satisfied that it is indestructible. Illegitimate force may no doubt restrain, counteract, trammel the liberty of exchanging, as it may the liberty of walking; but it can annihilate neither the one nor the other without annihilating man. This being so, it remains for us to inquire whether Competition tends to the happiness or misery of mankind; a question which amounts to this,—Is the human race naturally progressive, or are its tendencies fatally retrograde?

I hesitate not to say that Competition, which, indeed, we might denominate Liberty, despite the repulsion which it excites, despite the declamations to which it has given rise, is a law which is democratical in its essence. Of all the laws to which Providence has confided the progress of human society, it is the most progressive, levelling, and *communautaire*. It is this law which brings successively into the *common* domain the use and enjoyment of commodities which nature has accorded gratuitously only to certain countries. It is this law, again, which brings into the *common* domain all the conquests which the genius of each age bequeaths to succeeding generations, leaving them only supplementary labours to execute, which last they continue to exchange with one another, without succeeding, as they desire, in obtaining a recompense for the co-operation of natural agents; and if these labours, as happens always in the beginning, possess a value which is not proportionate to their intensity, it is still Competition which, by its incessant but unperceived action, restores an equilibrium which is sanctioned by justice, and which is more exact than any that the fallible sagacity of a human magistracy could by possibility establish. Far from Competition leading to inequality, as has been erroneously alleged, we may assert that all *factitious* inequality is imputable to its absence; and if the gulf between the Grand Lama and a Paria is more profound than that which separates the President from an artisan of the United States, the reason is this, that Competition (or Liberty), which is curbed and put down in Asia, is not so in America. This is the reason why, whilst the Socialists see in Competition the source of all that is evil, we trace to the attacks which have been made upon it the disturbance of all that is good. Although this great law has been misunderstood by the Socialists and their adepts; although it is frequently harsh in its operation, no law is more fertile in social

harmonies, more beneficent in general results; no law attests more brilliantly the measureless superiority of the designs of God over the vain and powerless combinations of men.

I must here remind the reader of that singular but unquestionable result of the social order to which I have already invited his attention,* and which the power of habit hides too frequently from our view. It is this, *that the sum total of satisfactions which falls to each member of society is much superior to those which he could procure for himself by his own efforts.* In other words, there is an evident disproportion between our consumption and our labour. This phenomenon, which all of us can easily verify, if we turn our regards upon ourselves, ought, it seems to me, to inspire some gratitude to society, to which we owe it.

We come into this world destitute of everything, tormented with numerous wants, and provided with nothing but faculties to enable us to struggle against them. *A priori*, it would seem that all we could expect would be to obtain satisfactions proportionate to our labour. If we obtain more, infinitely more, to what do we owe the excess? Precisely to that natural organization against which we are constantly declaiming, when we are not engaged in seeking to subvert it.

In itself the phenomenon is truly extraordinary. That certain men consume more than they produce is easily explained, if in one way or other they usurp the rights of other people—if they receive services without rendering them. But how can that be true of all men at the same time? How happens it that, after having exchanged their services without constraint, without spoliation, upon a footing of *equivalence*, each man can say to himself with truth, I consume in a day more than I could produce in a century?

The reader has seen that the additional element which resolves the problem is the co-operation of natural agents, constantly becoming more and more effective in the work of production; it is gratuitous utility falling continually into the domain of *Community;* it is the labour of heat and of cold, of light, of gravitation, of affinity, of elasticity, coming progressively to be added to the labour of man, diminishing the value of services by rendering them more easy.

I must have but feebly explained the theory of *value* if the reader imagines that value diminishes immediately and of its own accord, by the simple fact of the co-operation of natural forces,

* *Ante*, p. 18 *et seq.*

and the relief thereby afforded to human labour. It is not so; for then we might say with the English Economists that value is proportional to labour. The man who is aided by a natural and gratuitous force renders his services more easily; but he does not on that account renounce voluntarily any portion whatever of his accustomed remuneration. To induce him to do that, external coercion—pressure from without—severe but not unjust pressure—is necessary. It is Competition which exerts this pressure. As long as Competition does not intervene, as long as the man who has availed himself of a natural agent preserves his secret, that natural agent is gratuitous, but it is not yet *common*. The victory has been gained, but to the profit only of a single man, or a single class. It is not yet a benefit to mankind at large. No change has yet taken place, except that one description of *services*, although partly relieved from the pain of muscular exertion, still exacts all its former remuneration. We have, on the one hand, a man who exacts from all his fellows the same amount of labour as formerly, although he offers them a limited amount of his own labour in return. On the other, we have mankind at large, who are still obliged to make the same sacrifice of time and of labour in order to obtain a product now realized in part by nature.

Were things to remain in this state, a principle of indefinite inequality would be introduced into the world with every new invention. Not only could we not say that value is proportional to labour; we could not even say that value tends to become proportional to labour. All that we have said in the preceding chapters about *gratuitous utility* and *progressive community* would be chimerical. It would not be true that services are exchanged against services, in such a way that the gifts of God are transferred gratuitously from one man to another, down to the ultimate recipient, who is the consumer. Each would continue to be paid, not only for his labour, but for the natural forces which he had once succeeded in setting to work; in a word, society would be constituted on the principle of universal Monopoly, in place of on the principle of progressive Community.

But it is not so. God, who has bestowed on all his creatures heat, light, gravitation, air, water, the soil, the marvels of vegetable life, electricity, and countless other benefits which it is beyond my power to enumerate,—God, who has placed in the human breast the feeling of *personal interest*, which, like a magnet, attracts everything to itself,—God, I say, has placed also in the bosom of

society another spring of action, which he has charged with the care of preserving to his benefits their original destination, which was, that they should be gratuitous and common. This spring of action is Competition.

Thus, Personal Interest is that irrepressible force belonging to the individual which urges on to progress and discovery, which spurs us on to exertion, but leads also to monopoly. Competition is that force belonging to the species which is not less irrepressible, and which snatches progress, as it is realized, from individual hands, and makes it the common inheritance of the great family of mankind. These two forces, in each of which, considered individually, we might find something to blame, thus constitute social Harmony, by the play of their combinations, when regarded in conjunction.

And we may remark, in passing, that we ought not to be at all surprised that the individual interests of men, considered as producers, should from the beginning have risen up against Competition, should have rebuked it, and sought to destroy it—calling in for this purpose the assistance of force, fraud, privilege, sophistry, monopoly, restriction, legislative protection, &c. The morality of the means shows us clearly enough the morality of the end. But the astonishing and melancholy thing is, that science herself—false science, it is true—propagated with so much zeal by the socialist schools, in the name of philanthropy, equality, and fraternity, should have espoused the cause of Individualism, in its narrowest and most exclusive manifestation, and should have deserted the cause of humanity.

Let us see now how Competition acts:—

Man, under the influence of self-interest, is always, and necessarily, on the outlook for such circumstances as may give the greatest *value* to his services. He is not long in discovering that, as regards the gifts of God, he may be favoured in three ways:

1. He may appropriate to his own exclusive use these gifts themselves; or,

2. He may alone know the *process* by which they can be made useful; or,

3. He alone may possess the *instrument* by means of which their co-operation in the work of production can be secured.

In any of these cases, he gives *little* of his own labour in exchange for *much* of the labour of other men. His services have a high relative *value*, and we are led to believe that this excess of

value resides in the natural agent. If it were so, this value would not be subject to fall. Now, what proves that the value is in the service is, that we find Competition diminishing both value and service simultaneously.

1. Natural agents—the gifts of God—are not distributed uniformly over the different countries of the world. What an infinite variety of vegetable productions are spread over the wide range extending from the region of the pine to the region of the palm tree! Here the soil is more productive, there the heat is more vivifying. In one quarter we meet with stone, in another with lime, in another with iron, copper, or coal. Water-power is not to be found everywhere, nor can we everywhere avail ourselves to an equal extent of the power of the winds. Distance, from the objects we find essential, of itself makes a vast difference in the obstacles which our efforts encounter. Even the human faculties vary in some measure with climate and races.

It is easy to see that, but for the law of Competition, this inequality in the distribution of the gifts of God would lead to a corresponding inequality in the condition of men.

Whoever happened to have within reach a natural advantage would profit by it, but his fellow-men would not. He would not permit other men to participate in it through his instrumentality, without stipulating an excessive remuneration, the amount of which he would have the power of fixing arbitrarily. He could attach to his services any value he pleased. We have seen that the extreme limits between which it must be determined are, the *pains taken* by the man who renders the service, and the *pains saved* to the man who receives it. Competition alone hinders its being always raised to the maximum. The inhabitant of the tropics, for example, would say to the European—"Thanks to the sun's rays, I can, with labour *equal to ten*, procure a given quantity of sugar, coffee, cocoa, or cotton, whilst you, obliged in your cold climate to have recourse to hot-houses, stoves, and shelter, cannot obtain the same quantity but with labour equal *to a hundred*. You wish to obtain my coffee, sugar, or cotton, and you would not be sorry were I to take into account in the transaction only the pains which I have taken, the labour I have expended. But what I regard principally is the pains, the labour, I have saved you; for, aware that that is the limit of your resistance, I make it the limit of my exaction. As what I produce with an amount of labour equal to *ten*, you could produce only with labour

equal to *a hundred*, were I to demand in exchange for my sugar a commodity which cost you labour equal to 101, you would certainly refuse; but all that I ask is labour equal to 99. You may higgle and look gruff for a little, but you will come to my terms; for at this rate you have still an advantage by the exchange. You think these terms unfair; but, after all, it is not to you but to me that God has vouchsafed the advantage of a higher temperature. I know that I am in a position to take advantage of this gift of Providence, by depriving you of it, unless you pay me a tax, for I have no competitors. Here, then, are my sugar, my cocoa, my coffee, my cotton—take them on the conditions I impose—or raise them for yourself—or do without them."

It is true that the European might hold to the inhabitant of the tropics some such language as this: "Turn over your soil, dig pits, search for iron and coal, and felicitate yourself if you find any; for if not, it is my determination to push my exactions to an extreme also. God has vouchsafed to us both precious gifts. We appropriate as much of them as we require, but we will not suffer others to touch them without paying us a tax."

Even if things took place in this way, scientific exactness would not allow us to attribute to natural agents that Value which resides only in *services*. But the error would be harmless, for the result would be absolutely the same. Services would still be exchanged against services, but they would exhibit no tendency to conform to efforts, or labour, as a measure. The gifts of God would be *personal* privileges, not *common* benefits; and we might perhaps have some reason to complain that the Author of things had treated us in a way so incurably unequal. Should we, then, be brethren? Could we regard ourselves as the children of a common Father? The absence of Competition, that is to say of Liberty, would in the first instance be an insuperable bar to Equality. The absence of Equality would exclude all idea of Fraternity—and nothing of the republican motto* would then be left.

But let Competition be introduced, and we shall see it instantly present an insuperable barrier to all such leonine bargains, to all such forestalling of the gifts of God, to all such revolting pretensions in the appreciation of services, to all such inequalities with efforts exchanged.

And let us remark, first of all, that Competition acts forcibly,

* Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.—TRANSLATOR.

called forth as it is by these very inequalities. Labour betakes itself instinctively to the quarter where it is best remunerated, and never fails to put an end to this exceptional advantage, so that Inequality is only a spur which urges us on in spite of ourselves towards Equality. It is in truth one of the most beautiful *final intentions* observable in the social mechanism. Infinite Goodness, which manifests beneficence everywhere, would seem to have made choice of the avaricious producer in order to effect an equitable distribution among all; and truly it is a marvellous sight this, of self-interest realizing continually what it ever desires to avoid. Man, as a producer, is necessarily, inevitably, attracted by excessive returns, which he thus reduces to the ordinary rate. He pursues his own interest; and without knowing it, without wishing it, without seeking it, he promotes the general good.

Thus, to recur to our former example, the inhabitant of the tropics, trafficking in the gifts of God, realizes an excessive remuneration, and by that very means brings down upon himself Competition. Human labour exerts itself in proportion to the magnitude of the inequality, if I may use the expression, and never rests until that inequality is effaced. Under the action of Competition, we see the tropical labour, which was *equal to ten*, exchanged successively for European labour equal to 80, 50, 40, 20, and finally to 10. Under the empire of the natural laws of society, there is no reason why this should not take place; that is to say, there is no reason why services exchanged should not be measured by the labour performed, the pains taken,—the gifts of God on both sides being gratuitous and into the bargain. We have only to consider, in order to appreciate and bless the revolution which is thus effected. In the first instance, the labour undergone on both sides is equal, and this satisfies the human mind, which always desires justice. Then what has become of the gift of God? Attend to this, reader. No one has been deprived of it. In this respect we have not allowed ourselves to be imposed upon by the clamours of the tropical producer. The Brazilian, in as far as he is himself a consumer of sugar, or cotton, or coffee, never ceases to profit by the sun's rays—his good fortune does not cease to aid him in the work of production. What he has lost is only the unjust power of levying a tax upon the consumption of the inhabitants of Europe. The beneficence of Providence, because *gratuitous*, has become, as it ought to become, *common*; for *common* and *gratuitous* are in reality the same thing.

The gift of God has become common — and the reader will observe that I avail myself here of a special fact to elucidate a phenomenon which is universal—this gift, I say, has become common to all. This is not declamation, but the expression of a truth which is demonstrable. Why has this beautiful phenomenon been misunderstood? Because community is realized under the form of *value annihilated*, and the mind with difficulty lays hold of negations. But I ask, Is it not true that when, in order to obtain a certain quantity of sugar, coffee, or cotton, I give only one-tenth of the labour which I should find it necessary to expend in producing the commodity myself, and this because the Brazilian sun performs the other nine-tenths of the work,—Is it not true, I say, that in that case I still exchange labour for labour, and really and truly obtain, over and above the Brazilian labour, and into the bargain, the co-operation of the climate of the tropics? Can I not affirm with rigorous exactitude that I have become, that all men have become, in the same way as the Indians and Americans, that is to say gratuitously, participators in the liberality of nature, so far as the commodities in question are concerned?

England possesses productive coal mines. That is no doubt a great *local* advantage, more especially if we suppose, as I shall do for the sake of argument, that the Continent possesses no coal mines. Apart from the consideration of exchange, the advantage which this gives to the people of England is the possession of fuel in greater abundance than other nations,—fuel obtained with less labour, and at less expense of useful time. As soon as exchange comes into operation—keeping out of view Competition—the exclusive possession of these mines enables the people of England to demand a considerable remuneration, and to set a high price upon their labour. Not being in a situation to perform this labour ourselves, or procure what we want from another quarter, we have no alternative but to submit. English labour devoted to this description of work will be well remunerated; in other words, coal will be dear, and the bounty of nature may be considered as conferred on the people of one nation, and not on mankind at large.

But this state of things cannot last; for a great natural and social law is opposed to it—Competition. For the very reason that this species of labour is largely remunerated in England, it will be in great demand there, for men are always in quest of high remuneration. The number of miners will increase, both in consequence of the sons of miners devoting themselves to their fathers'

combustion set to work by the baker; nothing for the horse-power set to work by the carrier;—that he pays only for the services rendered, the pains taken, by human agents; and let him reflect that, but for Competition, he must have paid, over and above, a tax for the intervention of all these natural agents; that that tax would have had no other limit than the difficulty which he might himself have experienced in procuring the loaf by his own efforts, and that consequently a whole life would not have been sufficient to supply the remuneration which would have been demanded of him. Let him think farther, that he does not make use of a single commodity which might not give rise to the same reflections, and that these reflections apply not to him only, but to all mankind, and he will then comprehend the radical error of those socialist theories which, looking only at the surface of things, the epidermis of society, have been set up with so much levity against Competition, in other words, against human Liberty. He will then regard Competition, which preserves to the gifts of nature, unequally distributed, their common and gratuitous character, as the principle of a just and natural equalization; he will admire it as the force which holds in check the egotism of individual interest, with which at the same time it is so artistically combined as to serve both as a curb to avarice and a spur to exertion; and he will bless it as a most striking manifestation of God's impartial solicitude for the good of all his creatures.

From what has been said, we may deduce the solution of one of the problems which have been most keenly controverted, namely, that of free trade as between nation and nation. If it be true, as seems to me incontestable, that Competition leads the various countries of the globe to exchange with one another nothing else than labour, exertion more and more equalized, and to transfer at the same time reciprocally, and *into the bargain*, the natural advantages that each possesses; how blind and absurd must those men be who exclude foreign products by legislative measures, under the pretext that they are cheap, and have little value in proportion to their aggregate utility; that is to say, precisely because they include a large proportion of gratuitous utility!

I have said, and I repeat it, that I have confidence in a theory when I find it in accordance with universal practice. Now it is certain that countries would effect many exchanges with each other were they not interdicted *by force*. It requires the bayonet to prevent them; and for that reason it is wrong to prevent them.

2. Another circumstance places certain men in a favourable and exceptional situation as regards remuneration—I mean the personal and exclusive knowledge of the *processes* by means of which *natural agents* can alone be appropriated. What we term invention is a conquest by human genius; and these beautiful and pacific conquests, which are, in the first instance, a source of wealth for those who achieve them, become by and by, under the action of Competition, the *common and gratuitous* patrimony of all.

The forces of nature belong indeed to all. Gravitation, for instance, is common property; it surrounds us, pervades us, commands us. And yet were there but one mode of making gravitation co-operate towards a useful and determinate result, and but one man acquainted with that mode, this man might set a high price upon his work, or refuse to work except in exchange for a very high remuneration. His demands would have no limit until they reached the point at which the consumers must make greater sacrifices than the old processes entailed upon them. He may have contrived, for example, to annihilate nine-tenths of the labour necessary to produce a certain commodity, x. But x has at present a current market-price determined by the labour which its production by the ordinary methods exacts. The inventor sells x at the market-price; in other words, his labour receives a recompense ten times higher than that of his rivals. This is the first phase of the invention.

So far we discover nothing unjust or unfair. It is just and equitable that the man who makes the world acquainted with a useful process should be rewarded for it; — *A chacun selon sa capacité.*

Observe, too, that as yet mankind, with the exception of the inventor, have gained nothing unless virtually, and in perspective, so to speak, since in order to procure the commodity x, each acquirer must make a sacrifice equal to the former cost.

Now, however, the invention enters its second phase—that of *imitation.* Excessive remuneration awakens covetousness. The new process is more generally adopted; the price of the commodity x continues to fall, and the remuneration goes on diminishing in proportion as the imitation becomes more distant in date from the original invention, that is to say, in proportion as it becomes more easy, and for that reason less meritorious. Surely there is nothing in all this that cannot be avowed by a legislation the most advanced and the most impartial.

At length the invention reaches its third phase, its final stage, that of universal *diffusion*, when it becomes *common* and *gratuitous*. The cycle has been completed when Competition has brought back the remuneration of the producers of x to the general and normal rate yielded by all analogous work. Then the nine-tenths of the labour, which by the hypothesis we supposed to be saved by the invention, become an acquisition to mankind at large. The utility of the commodity x remains the same; but nine-tenths of that commodity are now the product of gravitation, a force which was formerly common to all in principle, but has now become common to all in this special application. So true is this, that all the consumers of that commodity throughout the world may now acquire it with one-tenth of the labour which it formerly cost. The surplus labour has been entirely annihilated by the new process.

If we consider that there is no human invention which has not described this circle, that x is here an algebraical sign which represents corn, clothing, books, ships,—in the production of which an incalculable amount of Labour or Value has been annihilated, by the plough, the spinning-jenny, the printing-press, and the sail; that this observation is applicable to the humblest of tools as well as to the most complicated mechanism, to the nail, the wedge, the lever, as well as to the steam-engine and the electric telegraph, we shall come, I trust, to understand the solution of this grand problem of human society, *that an amount of utility and enjoyment, always greater, and more and more equally distributed, comes to remunerate each determinate quantity of human labour.*

3. I have shown how Competition brings into the domain of the *common and gratuitous* both *natural agents* and the *processes* by which they are made operative. It remains to show that Competition executes the same function with reference to the instruments by means of which we set these agents to work. It is not enough that there should exist in nature a force, such as heat, light, gravitation, electricity; it is not enough that intelligence conceives the means of making that force available;—there must be *instruments* to realize this conception of the mind, and *provisions* to maintain those who devote themselves to it during the operation.

As regards remuneration, there is a third circumstance which favours a man, or a class of men, namely, the possession of *Capital*. The man who has in his hands the tools necessary for labour, the materials to work upon, and the provisions for his subsistence during the operation, is in a situation to determine his own remu-

neration. The principle of this is equitable, for capital is only anterior labour which has not yet been remunerated. The capitalist is in a good position to impose terms; but observe that, even when free from Competition, there is a limit which his demands never can exceed—this limit is the point at which his remuneration would absorb all the advantages of the service which he renders. In these circumstances, it is unreasonable to talk, as is so often done, of the *tyranny of capital*, seeing that even in the most extreme cases neither its presence nor its absence can injure the condition of the labourer. Like the inhabitant of the tropics, who has an intensity of heat at his disposal which nature has denied to colder regions—or like the inventor, who possesses the secret of a process unknown to other men—all that the capitalist can say is: "Would you profit by my labour—I set such a price upon it; if you find it too high, do as you have done hitherto—do without it."

But Competition takes place among capitalists. Tools, materials, and provisions, contribute to the creation of utilities only when employed. There is an emulation, then, among capitalists to find employment for their capital. All that this emulation forces them to abate from the extreme demand, of which I have just assigned the limits, resolving itself into a reduction of the price of the commodity, is so much clear profit, so much *gratuitous* gain, for the consumer, that is to say, for mankind.

This gain, however, can clearly never be *absolutely gratuitous*; for, since capital represents labour, that capital must always possess in itself the principle of remuneration.

Transactions relative to Capital are subject to the universal law of exchanges; and exchanges take place only because there is an advantage for the two contracting parties in effecting them,—an advantage which has no doubt a tendency to be equalized, but which accidentally may be greater for the one than for the other. There is a limit to the remuneration of capital, beyond which limit no one will consent to borrow it. This limit is the minimum of service for the borrower. In the same way, there is a limit beyond which no one will consent to lend, and this limit is the minimum of remuneration for the lender. This is self-evident. If the requirements of one of the contracting parties are pushed so far as to reduce to zero the benefit to be derived by the other from the transaction, the loan becomes impossible. The remuneration of capital oscillates between these two extreme terms, pressed towards

the maximum by the Competition of borrowers, brought back towards the minimum by the Competition of lenders; so that, by a necessity which is in harmony with justice, it rises when capital is scarce, and falls when it is abundant.

Many Economists imagine that the number of borrowers increases more rapidly than it is possible to create capital to lend to them, whence it would follow that the natural tendency of interest is to rise. The *fact* is decidedly the other way, and on all sides accordingly we perceive civilisation lowering the return for capital. This return, it is said, is 30 or 40 per cent. at Rome, 20 per cent. in Brazil, 10 per cent. in Algeria, 8 per cent. in Spain, 6 per cent. in Italy, 5 per cent. in Germany, 4 per cent. in France, 3 per cent. in England, and still less in Holland. Now all that part of the return for capital which is annihilated by progress, although lost to the capitalist, is not lost to mankind. If interest, originally at 40 per cent. is reduced to 2 per cent., all commodities will be freed from 38 parts in 40 of this element of cost. They will reach the consumer freed from this charge to the extent of nineteen-twentieths. This is a force which, like *natural agents*, like expeditive *processes*, resolves itself into *abundance*, *equalization*, and, finally, into an elevation of the general level of the human race.

I have still to say a few words on the Competition of labourer with labourer,—a subject which in these days has given rise to so much sentimental declamation. But have we not already exhausted this subject? I have shown that, owing to the action of Competition, men cannot long receive an exceptional remuneration for the co-operation of *natural forces*, for their acquaintance with new *processes*, or for the possession of *instruments* by means of which they avail themselves of these forces. This proves that efforts have a tendency to be exchanged on a footing of equality, or, in other words, that value tends to become proportionate to labour. Then I do not see what can justly be termed the Competition of labourers; still less do I see how it can injure their condition, since in this point of view workmen are themselves the consumers. The working class means everybody, and it is precisely this vast community which reaps ultimately the benefits of Competition, and all the advantage of values successively annihilated by progress.

The evolution is this: Services are exchanged against services, values against values. When a man (or a class) appropriates a

natural agent, or a new process, his demands are regulated, not by the labour which he undergoes, but by the labour which he saves to others. He presses his exactions to the extreme limit, without ever being able to injure the condition of others. He sets the greatest possible value on his services. But gradually, by the operation of Competition, this value tends to become proportioned to the labour performed; so that the evolution is brought to a conclusion when equal labour is exchanged for equal labour, both serving as the vehicle of an ever increasing amount of gratuitous utility, to the benefit of the community at large. In such circumstances, to assert that Competition can be injurious to the labourer, would be to fall into a palpable contradiction.

And yet this is constantly asserted, and constantly believed; and why? Because by the word labourer is understood not the great labouring community, but a particular class. You divide the community into two classes. On one side, you place all those who are possessed of capital, who live wholly or partly on anterior labour, or by intellectual labour, or the proceeds of taxation; on the other, you place those who have nothing but their hands, who live by wages, or—to use the consecrated expression—the *prolétaires*. You look to the relative position of these two classes, and you ask if, in that relative position, the Competition which takes place among those who live by wages is not fatal to them?

The situation of men of this last class, it is said, is essentially precarious. As they receive their wages from day to day, they live from hand to mouth. In the discussion which, under a free régime, precedes every bargain, they cannot wait; they must find work for to-morrow on any terms, under pain of death. If this be not strictly true of them all, it is at least true of many of them, and that is enough to depress the entire class; for those who are the most pressed and the poorest capitulate first, and establish the general rate of wages. The result is, that wages tend to fall to the lowest rate which is compatible with bare subsistence—and in this state of things, the occurrence of the least excess of Competition among the labourers is a veritable calamity; for, as regards them, the question is not one of diminished prosperity, but of simple existence.

Undoubtedly there is much that is true, much that is too true, *in fact*, in this description. To deny the sufferings and wretchedness of that class of men who bear so material a part in the busi-

ness of production, would be to shut our eyes to the light of day. It is, in fact, this deplorable condition of a great number of our brethren which forms the subject of what has been justly called the *social problem;* for although other classes of society are visited also with disquietudes, sufferings, sudden changes of fortune, commercial crises, and economic convulsions, it may nevertheless be said with truth that *liberty* would be accepted as a solution of the problem, did mere liberty not appear powerless to cure that rankling sore which we denominate Pauperism.

And although it is here, pre-eminently, that the social problem lies, the reader will not expect that I should enter upon it in this place. Its solution, please God, may be the result of the entire work, but it clearly cannot be the result of a single chapter.

I am at present engaged in the exposition of general laws, which I believe to be harmonious; and I trust the reader will now begin to be convinced that these laws exist, and that their action tends towards community, and consequently towards equality. But I have not denied that the action of these laws is profoundly troubled by disturbing causes. If, then, we now encounter inequality as a stubborn *fact*, how can we be in circumstances to form a judgment regarding it until we have first of all investigated the regular laws of the social order, and the causes which disturb the action of these laws?

On the other hand, I have ignored neither the existence of evil nor its mission. I have ventured to assert, that *free-will* having been vouchsafed to man, it is not necessary to confine the term *harmony* to an aggregate from which evil should be excluded; for free-will implies error, at least possible error, and error is evil. Social harmony, like everything which concerns man, is relative. Evil is a necessary part of the machinery destined to overcome error, ignorance, injustice, by bringing into play two great laws of our nature—responsibility and solidarity.

Now, taking pauperism as an existing fact, are we to impute it to the natural laws which govern the social order,—or to human institutions which act in a sense contrary to these laws,—or, finally, to the people themselves, who are the victims, and who, by their errors and their faults, have brought down this severe chastisement on their own heads?

In other words, does pauperism exist by providential destination,—or, on the contrary, by what remains of the artificial in our political organization,—or as a personal retribution? Fatality,

Injustice, Responsibility—to which of these three causes must we attribute this frightful sore?

I hesitate not to assert that it cannot be the result of the natural laws which have hitherto been the subject of our investigations, seeing that these laws all tend to equalization by amelioration; that is to say, to bring all men to one and the same level, which level is continually rising. This, then, is not the place to seek a solution of the problem of pauperism.

At present, if we would consider specially that class of labourers who execute the most material portion of the work of production, and who, in general, having no interest in the profits, live upon a fixed remuneration called *wages*, the question we have to investigate is this: Apart from the consideration of good or bad economic institutions—apart from the consideration of the evils which the men who live by wages [the *prolétaires*] bring upon themselves by their faults—what is, as regards them, the proper effect of Competition?

For this class, as for all, the operation of Competition is twofold. They feel it both as buyers and as sellers of services. The error of those who write upon these subjects is never to look but at one side of the question, like natural philosophers, who, if they took into account only centrifugal force, would never cease to believe and to prophesy that all was over with us. Grant their false datum, and you will see with what irrefragable logic they conduct you to this sinister conclusion. The same may be said of the lamentations which the Socialists found upon the exclusive consideration of centrifugal Competition, if I may be allowed the expression. They forget to take into account centripetal Competition; and that is sufficient to reduce their doctrines to puerile declamation. They forget that the workman, when he presents himself in the market with the wages he has earned, becomes a centre towards which innumerable branches of industry tend, and that he profits then by that universal Competition of which all trades complain in their turn.

It is true that the labourer, when he regards himself as a producer, as the person who supplies labour or services, complains also of Competition. Grant, then, that Competition benefits him on one side, while it pinches him on the other, the question comes to be, Is the balance favourable or unfavourable—or is there compensation?

I must have explained myself very obscurely if the reader does

not see that in the play of this marvellous mechanism, the action of Competition, apparently antagonistic, tends to the singular and consoling result, that there is a balance which is favourable to all at the same time; caused by gratuitous Utility continually enlarging the circle of production, and falling continually into the domain of Community. Now, that which becomes common is profitable to all without hurting any one; we may even say—for this is mathematically certain—is profitable to each in proportion to his previous poverty. It is this portion of *gratuitous* utility, forced by Competition to become *common*, which causes the tendency of value to become proportioned to labour, to the evident benefit of the labourer. This, too, renders evident the social solution which I have pressed so much on the attention of the reader, and which is only concealed by the illusions of habit,—for a determinate amount of labour each receives an amount of satisfactions which tends to be increased and equalized.

Moreover, the condition of the labourer does not depend upon one economic law, but upon all. To become acquainted with that condition, to discover the prospects and the future of the labourer, this is Political Economy; for what other object could that science have in view? . . . But I am wrong—we have still spoliators. What causes the equivalence of services? Liberty. What impairs that equivalence? Oppression. Such is the circle we have still to traverse.

As regards the condition of that class of labourers who execute the more immediate work of production, it cannot be appreciated until we are in a situation to discover in what manner the law of Competition is combined with that of Wages and Population, and also with the disturbing effects of unequal taxes and monopolies.

I shall add but a few words on the subject of Competition. It is very clear that it has no natural tendency to diminish the amount of the enjoyments which are distributed over society. Does Competition tend to make this distribution unequal? If there be anything evident in the world, it is that after having, if I may so express myself, attached to each service, to each value, a larger proportion of utility, Competition labours incessantly to level the services themselves, to render them proportional to efforts. Is Competition not the spur which urges men into profitable branches of industry, and urges them out of those which are unprofitable? Its proper action, then, is to realize equality more and more, by elevating the social level.

Let us not misunderstand each other, however, on this word equality. It does not imply that all men are to have the same remuneration, but that they are to have a remuneration proportioned to the quantity, and even to the quality of their efforts.

A multitude of circumstances contribute to render the remuneration of labour unequal (I speak here only of free labour, subject to Competition); but if we look at it more narrowly, we shall find that this fancied inequality, almost always just and necessary, is in reality nothing else than substantial equality.

Cæteris paribus, there are larger profits in those trades which are attended with danger than in those which are not so; in those which require a lengthened apprenticeship, and expensive training long unremunerated—which imply the patient exercise of certain domestic virtues—than in those where mere muscular exertion is sufficient; in professions which demand a cultivated mind and refined taste, than in trades which require mere brute force. Is not all this just? Now, *Competition* establishes necessarily these distinctions—and society has no need of the assistance of Fourier or Louis Blanc in the matter.

Of all these circumstances, that which operates in the greatest number of cases is the inequality of instruction. Now here, as everywhere else, we find Competition exerting its twofold action, levelling classes, and elevating society.

If we suppose society to be composed of two layers or strata, placed one above another, in one of which the intelligent principle prevails, and in the other the principle of brute force; and if we study the natural relations of these two layers, we shall easily discover a force of attraction in the one, and a force of aspiration in the other, which co-operate towards their fusion. The very inequality of profits breathes into the inferior ranks an inextinguishable ardour to mount to the region of ease and leisure; and this ardour is seconded by the superior knowledge which distinguishes the higher classes. The methods of teaching are improved; books fall in price; instruction is acquired in less time, and at a smaller cost; science, formerly monopolized by a class or a caste, and veiled in a dead language, or sealed up in hieroglyphics, is written and printed in the vulgar tongue; it pervades the atmosphere, if I may use the expression, and is breathed as freely as the air of heaven.

Nor is this all. At the same time that an education more universal and more equal brings the two classes of society into closer

approximation, some very important economic phenomena, which are connected with the great law of Competition, come to aid and accelerate their fusion. The progress of the mechanical arts diminishes continually the proportion of manual labour. The division of labour, by simplifying and separating each of the operations which concur in a productive result, brings within the reach of all, branches of industry which could formerly be engaged in only by a few. Moreover, a great many employments which required at the outset much knowledge and varied acquirements, fall, by the mere lapse of time, into *routine*, and come within the sphere of action of classes generally the least instructed, as has happened in the case of agriculture. Agricultural processes, which in ancient times procured to their discoverers the honours of an apotheosis, are now inherited and almost monopolized by the rudest of men; and to such a degree, that this important branch of human industry is, so to speak, entirely withdrawn from the *well educated* classes.

From the preceding observations it is possible that a false conclusion may be drawn. It may be said—"We perceive, indeed, that Competition lowers remuneration in all countries, in all departments of industry, in all ranks; and levels, *by reducing*, it; but in that case the wages of unskilled labour, of physical exertion, must become the type, the standard, of all remuneration."

I must have been misunderstood, if you have not perceived that *Competition*, which labours to bring down all excessive remuneration towards an average more and more uniform, raises *necessarily* this average. I grant that it pinches men in their capacity of producers, but in so doing it ameliorates the condition of the human race in the only way in which it can reasonably be elevated, namely, by an increase of material prosperity, ease, leisure, moral and intellectual improvement, in a word, by enlarging *consumption*.

Will it be said that, in point of fact, mankind have not made the progress that this theory seems to imply?

I answer, in the first place, that in modern society Competition is far from occupying the sphere of its natural action. Our laws run counter to it, at least in as great a degree as they favour its action; and when it is asked whether the inequality of conditions is owing to its presence or its absence, it is sufficient to look at the men who make the greatest figure among us, and dazzle us by the display of their scandalous wealth, in order to assure ourselves that inequality, so far as it is artificial and unjust, has for foundation conquests, monopolies, restrictions, privileged offices, functions, and

places, ministerial trafficking, public borrowing,—all things with which Competition has nothing to do.

Moreover, I believe we have overlooked the real progress which mankind have made since the very recent epoch to which we must assign the partial enfranchisement of labour. It has been justly said that much philosophy is needed in order to discern facts which are continually passing before us. We are not astonished at what an honest and laborious family of the working class daily consumes, because habit has made us familiar with this strange phenomenon. If, however, we compare the comfortable circumstances in which such a family finds itself, with the condition in which it would be placed under a social order which excluded Competition —if statisticians, armed with an instrument of sufficient precision, could measure, as with a dynamometer, the relation of a working man's labour to his enjoyments at two different periods, we should acknowledge that liberty, restrained as it still is, has accomplished in his favour a prodigy which its very permanency hinders us from remarking. The contingent of human efforts which, in relation to a given result, has been annihilated, is truly incalculable. Time was when the artisan's day's labour would not have sufficed to procure him the most trumpery almanac. At the present day, for a halfpenny, or the fiftieth part of his day's wages, he can obtain a gazette containing the matter of a volume. The same might be said of clothing, locomotion, carriage, lighting, and a multitude of other satisfactions. To what is this result owing? To this, that an enormous proportion of human labour, which had formerly to be paid for, has been handed over to be performed by the gratuitous forces of nature. It is a value annihilated, and to be no longer recompensed. Under the action of Competition, it has been replaced by common and gratuitous utility. And it is worthy of remark, that when, in consequence of progress, the price of any commodity comes to fall, the labour *saved* to the poor purchaser in obtaining it is always *proportionally* greater than the labour saved to the rich purchaser. That is demonstrable.

In fine, this constantly increasing current of utilities which labour pours into all the veins of the body politic, and which Competition distributes, is not all summed up in an accession of wealth. It is absorbed, in great part, by the stream of advancing numbers. It resolves itself into an increase of population, according to laws which have an intimate affinity with the subject which now engages us, and which will be explained in another chapter.

Let us now stop for a moment, and take a rapid glance at the ground over which we have just travelled.

Man has wants which are unlimited—desires which are insatiable. In order to provide for them, he has materials and agents which are furnished to him by nature—faculties, instruments, all things which *labour* sets in motion. Labour is the resource which has been most equally distributed to all. Each man seeks instinctively, and of necessity, to avail himself to the utmost of the co-operation of natural forces, of talents natural and acquired, and of capital, in order that the result of this co-operation may be a greater amount of utilities produced, or, what comes to the same thing, a greater amount of satisfactions acquired. Thus, the more active co-operation of natural agents, the indefinite development of intelligence, the progressive increase of capital, give rise to this phenomenon (which at first sight seems strange)—that a given quantity of labour furnishes an always increasing amount of utilities, and that each man can, without despoiling anyone, obtain a mass of consumable commodities out of all proportion to what his own efforts could have realized.

But this phenomenon, which is the result of the divine harmony which Providence has established in the mechanism of society, would have been detrimental to society, by introducing the germ of indefinite inequality, had there not been combined with it a harmony no less admirable, namely, Competition, which is one of the branches of the great law of human *solidarity*.

In fact, were it possible for an individual, a family, a class, a nation, possessed of certain natural advantages, of an important discovery in manufactures, or of the instruments of production in the shape of accumulated capital, to be set permanently free from the law of Competition, it is evident that this individual, this family, this nation, would have for ever the monopoly of an exceptionally high remuneration, at the expense of mankind at large. In what situation should we be, if the inhabitants of the tropical regions, set free from all rivalry with each other, could exact from us, in exchange for their sugar, their coffee, their cotton, their spices, not the equivalent of labour equal to their own, but an amount of labour equal to what we must ourselves undergo in order to produce these commodities under our inclement skies? What an incalculable distance would separate the various conditions of men, if the race of Cadmus alone could read, if the direct descendants of Triptolemus alone could handle the plough, if

printing were confined to the family of Gutenberg, cotton-spinning to the children of Arkwright, and if the posterity of Watt could alone work the steam-engine! Providence has not ordered things thus, but, on the contrary, has placed in the social machine a spring whose power is only less surprising than its simplicity—a spring by the operation of which all productive power, all superiority in manufacturing processes, in a word, all exclusive advantages, slip from the hands of the producer, having remained there, in the shape of exceptional remuneration, only long enough to excite his zeal, and come at length to enlarge the common and gratuitous patrimony of mankind, and resolve themselves into individual enjoyments always progressive, and more and more equally distributed—this spring is *Competition*. We have already seen its economical effects—and it now remains for us to take a rapid survey of its moral and political consequences. I shall confine myself to the more important of these.

Superficial thinkers have accused Competition of introducing *antagonism* among men. This is true and inevitable, if we consider men only in the capacity of producers, but, regarded from another point of view, as consumers, the matter appears in a very different light. You then see this very Competition binding together individuals, families, classes, nations, and races, in the bonds of universal fraternity.

Seeing that the advantages which appear at first to be the property of certain individuals, become, by an admirable law of Divine beneficence, the common patrimony of all; seeing that the *natural advantages* of situation, of fertility, of temperature, of mineral riches, and even of manufacturing aptitude, slip in a short time from the hands of producers, by reason of their competition with each other, and turn exclusively to the profit of consumers, it follows that there is no country which is not interested in the advancement and prosperity of all other countries. Every step of progress made in the East is wealth in perspective for the West. Fuel discovered in the South warms the men of the North. Great Britain makes progress in her spinning mills; but her capitalists do not alone reap the profit, for the interest of money does not rise; nor do her operatives, for the wages of labour remain the same. In the long-run, it is the Russian, the Frenchman, the Spaniard; in a word, it is the human race, who obtain equal satisfactions at a less expense of labour, or, what comes to the same thing, superior satisfactions with equal labour.

I have spoken only of the advantages—I might say as much of the disadvantages—which affect certain nations and certain regions. The peculiar action of Competition is to render general what was before exclusive. It acts exactly on the principle of *Insurance*. A scourge visits the fields of the agriculturist, and the consumers of the bread are the sufferers. An unjust tax is laid upon the vines of France, and this means dear *wine* for all wine-drinkers. Thus, advantages and disadvantages, which have any permanence, only glance upon individuals, classes, or nations. Their providential destination in the long-run is to affect humanity at large, and elevate or lower the condition of mankind. Hence to envy a certain people the fertility of their soil, or the beauty of their harbours and rivers, or the warmth of their sun, is to overlook the advantages in which we are called to participate. It is to contemn the abundance which is offered to us. It is to regret the labour which is saved to us. Hence national jealousies are not only perverse feelings;—they are absurd. To hurt others is to injure ourselves. To place obstacles in the way of others — tariffs, coalitions, or wars—is to obstruct our own progress. Hence bad passions have their chastisement just as generous sentiments have their reward. The inevitable sanction of an exact distributive justice addresses itself to men's interests, enlightens opinion, proclaims and establishes among men these maxims of eternal truth: that the useful is one of the aspects of the just; that Liberty is the fairest of social Harmonies; and that Honesty is the best Policy.

Christianity has introduced into the world the grand principle of human fraternity. It addresses itself to our hearts, our feelings, our noble instincts. Political Economy recommends the same principle to our cool judgment; and, exhibiting the connexion of effects with their causes, reconciles in consoling harmony the vigilant calculations of interest with the inspirations of the sublimest morality.

A second consequence which flows from this doctrine is, that society is truly a *Community*. Messieurs Owen and Cabet may save themselves the trouble of seeking the solution of the great *Communist* problem—it is found already—it results not from their arbitrary combinations, but from the organization given by God to man, and to society. Natural forces, expeditive processes, instruments of production, everything is *common* among men, or has a tendency to become so, everything *except pains*, labour, in-

dividual effort. There is, and there can be, but one *inequality*,—an inequality which Communists the most absolute must admit,—that which results from the inequality of efforts. These efforts are what are exchanged for one another at a price bargained for. All the utility which nature, and the genius of ages, and human foresight, have implanted in the commodities exchanged, we obtain *into the bargain*. Reciprocal remunerations have reference only to reciprocal efforts, whether actual under the name of Labour, or preparatory under the name of Capital. Here then is Community in the strictest sense of the word, unless we are to pretend that the personal share of enjoyment should be equal, although the quota of labour furnished is not so, which indeed would be the most iniquitous, the most monstrous, of inequalities,—I will add, the most fatal; for it would not destroy Competition—it would only give it a retrograde action. We should still compete, but the Competition would be a rivalry of idleness, stupidity, and improvidence.

In fine, the doctrine,—so simple, and, as we think, so true,—which we have just developed, takes the great principle of human *perfectibility* out of the domain of declamation, and transfers it to that of rigorous demonstration. This internal motive, which is never at rest in the bosom of the individual, but stirs him up to improve his condition, gives rise to the progress of art, which is nothing else than the progressive co-operation of forces, which from their nature call for no remuneration. To Competition is owing the concession to the community of advantages at first individually obtained. The intensity of the labour required for the production of each given result goes on continually diminishing, to the advantage of the human race, which thus sees the circle of its enjoyments and its leisure enlarging from one generation to another, whilst the level of its physical, intellectual, and moral improvement is raised; and by this arrangement, so worthy of our study and of our profound admiration, we behold mankind recovering the position they had lost.

Let me not be misunderstood, however. I do not say that all fraternity, all community, all perfectibility, are comprised and included in Competition. I say only that Competition is allied and combined with these three great social dogmas—that it forms part of them, that it exhibits them, that it is one of the most powerful agents of their realization.

I have endeavoured to describe the general effects of Competi-

tion, and consequently its benefits, for it would be impious to suppose that any great law of nature should be at once hurtful and permanent; but I am far from denying that the action of Competition is accompanied with many hardships and sufferings. It appears to me that the theory which has just been developed explains at once those sufferings, and the inevitable complaints to which they give rise. Since the work of Competition consists in *levelling*, it must necessarily run counter to all who proudly attempt to rise above the general level. Each producer, in order to obtain the highest price for his labour, endeavours, as we have seen, to retain as long as possible the exclusive use of an *agent*, a *process*, or an *instrument*, of production. Now the proper mission and result of Competition being to withdraw this exclusive use from the individual, in order to make it *common* property, it is natural that all men, in their capacity of producers, should unite in a concert of maledictions against *Competition*. They cannot reconcile themselves to Competition otherwise than by taking into account their interests as consumers, and regarding themselves, not as members of a coterie or a corporation, but as men.

Political Economy, we must say, has not yet exerted herself sufficiently to dissipate this fatal illusion, which has been the source of so much heartburning, calamity, and irritation, and of so many wars. This science, from a preference not very philosophical, has exhausted her efforts in analyzing the phenomena of production. The very nomenclature of the science, in fact, convenient as it is, is not in harmony with its object. Agriculture, manufactures, commerce, may be an excellent classification, when the object is to describe the *processes* of art; but that description, however essential in technology, has little connexion with social economy;—I should even say that it is positively dangerous. When we have classed men as agriculturists, manufacturers, and merchants, of what can we speak but of their class interests, of those special interests to which Competition is antagonistic, and which are placed in opposition to the general good? It is not for the sake of agriculturists that agriculture exists, of manufacturers that we have manufactures, or of merchants that we have exchanges, but in order that men should have at their disposal the greatest amount of commodities of every kind. *Consumption*, its laws, what favours it, and renders it equitable and moral—that is the interest which is truly social, and which truly affects the human race. It is the interest of the consumer which con-

afflicting doubt and subversive error. Political liberty has unchained tempests and revolutions, and has modified the simple manners of primitive nations, to such a degree as to induce thinking men to ask themselves whether they would not have preferred tranquillity under the cold shade of despotism. Christianity herself has cast the noble seed of love and charity into a soil saturated with the blood of martyrs.

Why has it entered into the designs of Infinite Goodness and Justice that the happiness of one region or of one era should be purchased at the expense of the sufferings of another region or of another era? What is the Divine purpose which is concealed under this great law of *solidarity*, of which Competition is only one of the mysterious aspects? Human science cannot answer. What we do know is this, that good always goes on increasing, and that evil goes on diminishing. From the beginning of the social state, such as conquest had made it, when there existed only masters and slaves, and the inequality of conditions was extreme, the work of Competition in approximating ranks, fortunes, intelligences, could not be accomplished without inflicting individual hardships, the intensity of which, however, as the work proceeded, has gone on diminishing, like the vibrations of sound and the oscillations of the pendulum. To the sufferings yet in reserve for them, men learn every day to oppose two powerful remedies — namely, *foresight*, which is the fruit of knowledge and experience; and *association*, which is organized foresight.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

In the first part of this work—alas! too hastily written—I have endeavoured to keep the reader's attention fixed upon the line of demarcation, always flexible, but always marked, which separates the two regions of the economic world—natural co-operation, and human labour—the bounty of God, and the work of man—the gratuitous, and the onerous—that which in exchange is remunerated, and that which is transferred without remuneration—aggregate utility, and the fractional and supplementary utility which constitutes value—absolute wealth, and relative wealth—the co-operation of chemical or mechanical forces, constrained to aid production by the instruments which render them available, and the just recompense of the labour which has created these instruments themselves—Community, and Property.

It is not enough to mark these two orders of phenomena which are so essentially different, it is necessary also to deseribe their relations, and, if I may so express myself, their harmonious evolutions. I have essayed to explain how the business of Property consists in conquering utility for the human race, and, casting it into the domain of Community, to move on to new conquests—so that each given effort, and consequently the aggregate of efforts, should continually be delivering over to mankind satisfactions which are always increasing. Human services exchanged, while preserving their relative value, become the vehicle of an always increasing proportion of utility which is gratuitous, and, therefore, common; and in this consists progress. The possessors of value, then, whatever form it assumes, far from usurping and monopolizing the gifts of God, multiply these gifts, without causing them to lose the character which Providence has affixed to them, of being—Gratuitous.

In proportion as the satisfactions which are handed over by

progress to the charge of nature fall by that very fact into the domain of Community, they become *equal*—it being impossible for us even to conceive inequality except in the domain of human services, which are compared, appreciated, and *estimated* with a view to an exchange; whence it follows that Equality among men is necessarily progressive. It is so, likewise, in another respect, the action of Competition having for its inevitable result to level and equalize the services themselves, and to bring their recompense more and more into proportion with their merit.

Let us now throw a glance back on the ground over which we have passed.

By the light of the theory, the foundation of which has been laid in the present volume, we shall have to investigate:

The relations of man with the Economic phenomena, in his capacity of producer, and in his character of consumer;

The law of Rent;

That of Wages;

That of Credit;

That of Taxation, which, introducing us into the domain of Politics, properly so called, will lead us to compare those services which are private and voluntary with those which are public and compulsory;

The law of Population.

We shall then be in a situation to solve some practical problems which are still disputed—Free-trade, Machinery, Luxury, Leisure, Association, Organization of Labour, &c.

I hesitate not to say, that the result of this exposition may be expressed beforehand in these terms: *The constant approximation of all men towards a level which is always rising*—in other terms: *Improvement and Equalization;* in a single word, HARMONY.

Such is the definitive result of the arrangements of Providence —of the great laws of nature—when they act without impediment, when we regard them as they are in themselves, and apart from any disturbance of their action by error and violence. On beholding this Harmony, the Economist may well exclaim, like the astronomer who regards the planetary movements, or the physiologist who contemplates the structure and arrangement of the human organs—*Digitus Dei est hic!*

But man is a free agent, and consequently fallible. He is subject to ignorance and to passion. His will, which is liable to err, enters as an element into the play of the economic laws. He may

misunderstand them, forget them, divert them from their purpose. As the physiologist, after admiring the infinite wisdom displayed in the structure and relations of our organs and viscera, studies these organs likewise in their abnormal state when sickly and diseased, we shall have to penetrate into a new world—the world of social Disturbances.

We shall pave the way for this new study by some considerations on man himself. It would be impossible for us to give an account of *social evil*, of its origin, its effects, its design—of the limits, always more and more contracted, within which it is shut up by its own action (which constitutes what I might almost venture to call a harmonic dissonance), did we not extend our investigation to the necessary consequences of Free-Will, to the errors of Self-Interest, which are constantly corrected, and to the great laws of human Responsibility and Solidarity.

We have seen the germ of all the *social Harmonies* included in these two principles—PROPERTY, LIBERTY. We shall see that all *social Dissonances* are only the development of these two antagonistic principles—SPOLIATION, OPPRESSION.

The words Property and Liberty, in fact, express only two aspects of the same idea. In an economical point of view, Liberty is allied to the act of production—Property to the things produced. And since Value has its foundation in the human act, we may conclude that Liberty implies and includes Property. The same relation exists between Oppression and Spoliation.

Liberty! here at length we have the principle of harmony. Oppression! here we have the principle of dissonance. The struggle of these two powers fills the annals of the human race.

And as the design of Oppression is to effect an unjust appropriation, as it resolves itself into and is summed up in spoliation, it is Spoliation that must form the subject of our inquiry.

Man comes into this world bound to the yoke of Want, which is pain.

He cannot escape from it but by subjecting himself to the yoke of Labour, which is pain also.

He has, then, only a choice of pains, and he detests pain.

This is the reason why he looks around, him and if he sees that his fellow-man has accumulated wealth, he conceives the thought of appropriating it. Hence comes false property, or Spoliation.

Spoliation! here we have a new element in the economy of society.

From the day when it first made its appearance in the world down to the day when it shall have completely disappeared, if that day ever come, this element has affected and will affect profoundly the whole social mechanism; it will disturb, and to the extent of rendering them no longer recognisable, those laws of social harmony which we have endeavoured to discover and describe.

Our duty, then, will not have been accomplished until we have completed the monography of Spoliation.

It may be imagined that we have here to do with an accidental and exceptional fact, a transient derangement unworthy of the investigations of science.

But in truth it is not so. On the contrary, Spoliation, in the traditions of families, in the history of nations, in the occupations of individuals, in the physical and intellectual energies of classes, in the schemes and designs of governments, occupies nearly as prominent a place as Property itself.

No; Spoliation is not an ephemeral scourge, affecting accidentally the social mechanism, and which economical science may disregard as exceptional.

The sentence pronounced upon man in the beginning was, *In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread.* Whence it appears that effort and satisfaction are indissolubly united, and that the one must be always the recompense of the other. But on all sides we find man revolting against this law, and saying to his brother, Thine be the labour, and mine the fruit of that labour.

Repair to the hut of the savage hunter, or to the tent of the nomad shepherd, and what spectacle meets your eyes? The wife, lank, pale, disfigured, affrighted, prematurely old, bears the whole burden of the household cares, while the man lounges in idleness. What idea can we form of family Harmonies? The idea has disappeared, for Strength here throws upon Feebleness the weight of labour. And how many ages of civilizing effort will be needed to raise the wife from this state of frightful degradation?

Spoliation, in its most brutal form, armed with torch and sword, fills the annals of the world. Of what names is history made up? Cyrus, Sesostris, Alexander, Scipio, Cæsar, Attila, Tamerlane, Mahomet, Pizarro, William the Conqueror—pure Spoliation from beginning to end in the shape of Conquest. Hers are the laurels, the monuments, the statues, the triumphal arches, the song of the poet, the intoxicating enthusiasm of the fair!

The Conqueror soon finds that he can turn his victories to more profitable account than by putting to death the vanquished; and Slavery covers the earth. Down to our own times, all over the world this has been the form in which societies have existed, bringing with it hates, resistance, internal struggles, and revolutions. And what is Slavery but organized oppression—organized for the purpose of Spoliation?

But Spoliation not only arms Force against Feebleness—she turns Intelligence against Credulity. What hard-working people in the world has escaped being sweated by sacerdotal theocracies, Egyptian priests, Greek oracles, Roman auguries, Gallic druids, Indian brahmins, muftis, ulemas, bonzes, monks, ministers, mountebanks, sorcerers, soothsayers,—spoliators of all garbs and of all denominations. Assuming this guise, Spoliation places the fulcrum of her lever in heaven, and sacrilegiously prides herself on the complicity of the gods! She enslaves not men's limbs only, but their souls. She knows how to impress the iron of slavery as well upon the conscience of Séide * as upon the forehead of Spartacus — realizing what would seem impossible — Mental Slavery.

Mental Slavery! what a frightful association of words! O Liberty! we have seen thee hunted from country to country, crushed by conquest, groaning under slavery, insulted in courts, banished from the schools, laughed at in saloons, misunderstood in workshops, denounced in churches. It seems thou shouldst find in thought an inviolable refuge. But if thou art to surrender in this thy last asylum, what becomes of the hopes of ages, and the boasted courage of the human race?

At length, however, the progressive nature of man causes Spoliation to develop, in the society in which it exists, resistance which paralyzes its force, and knowledge which unveils its impostures. But Spoliation does not confess herself conquered for all that; she only becomes more crafty, and, enveloping herself in the forms of government and in a system of checks and counterpoises, she gives birth to Politics, long a prolific resource. We then see her usurping the liberty of citizens, the better to get hold of their wealth, and draining away their wealth to possess herself more surely of their liberty. Private activity passes into the domain of public activity. Everything is transacted through functionaries, and an unintelligent and meddling bureaucracy over-

* See Voltaire's tragedy, *Le Fanatisme*.—Translator.

spreads the land. The public treasury becomes a vast reservoir into which labourers pour their savings, to be immediately distributed among placemen. Transactions are no longer regulated by free bargaining and discussion, and the *mutuality of services* disappears.

In this state of things the true notion of Property is extinguished, and every one appeals to the Law to give his services a factitious value.

We enter then upon the era of privileges. Spoliation, ever improving in subtilty, fortifies herself in Monopoly, and takes refuge behind Restrictions. She displaces the natural current of exchanges, and sends capital into artificial channels, and with capital, labour—and with labour, population. She gets painfully produced in the North what is produced with facility in the South; creates precarious classes and branches of industry; substitutes for the gratuitous forces of nature the onerous fatigues of labour; cherishes establishments which can sustain no rivalry, and invokes against competitors the employment of force; provokes international jealousies; flatters patriotic arrogance; and invents ingenious theories, which make auxiliaries of her own dupes. She constantly renders imminent industrial crises and bankruptcies, shakes to its foundation all confidence in the future, all faith in liberty, all consciousness of what is just. At length, when science exposes her misdeeds, she stirs up against science her own victims, by proclaiming a Utopia! and ignores not only the science which places obstacles in her path, but the very idea of any possible science, by this crowning sentence of scepticism—There are no principles!

Under the pressure of suffering, at length the masses rise, and overturn everything which is above them. Government, taxes, legislation, everything is at their mercy, and you imagine perhaps that there is now an end to the reign of Spoliation;—that the mutuality of services is about to be established on the only possible, or even imaginable basis—Liberty. Undeceive yourself. The fatal idea, alas! has permeated the masses, that Property has no other origin, no other sanction, no other legitimacy, no other foundation, than Law; and then the masses set to work legislatively to rob one another. Suffering from the wounds which have been inflicted upon them, they undertake to cure each of their members by conceding to him the right to oppress his neighbour, and call this Solidarity and Fraternity. "You have produced—I have

not produced—we are *solidaires*—let us divide." "You have something—I have nothing—we are brethren—let us share." It will be our duty then to examine the improper use which has been made in these latter days of the terms association, organization, labour, *gratuité du crédit*, &c. We shall have to subject them to this test—Do they imply Liberty or Oppression? In other words, are they in unison with the great Economical laws, or are they disturbances of those laws?

Spoliation is a phenomenon too universal, too persistent, to permit us to attribute to it a character purely accidental. In this, as in many other matters, we cannot separate the study of natural laws from the study of their Perturbations.

But, it may be said, if spoliation enters necessarily into the play of the social mechanism as a *dissonance*, how can you venture to assert the Harmony of the Economic laws?

I must repeat here what I have said in another place, namely, that in all which concerns man, a being who is only *perfectible* because he is *imperfect*, Harmony consists, not in the absolute absence of *evil*, but in its gradual diminution. The social body, like the human body, is provided with a curative force, a *vis medicatrix*, the laws and infallible power of which it is impossible to study without again exclaiming, *Digitus Dei est hic.*

THE END.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE TO PART II.

THE additions to the *Harmonies Économiques* now submitted to the English reader were written during the last illness of the author. Prior to his departure for Italy, on what he foresaw might be his last journey, he had communicated to his friends, MM. de Fontenay and Paillottet, a list of the new chapters, in the order in which they will be found in the Notice of his Life and Writings prefixed to Part I.* To the same friends, in his last moments, he intrusted the manuscripts intended for the continuation of the work, leaving to them the task of selection and arrangement. The duty thus committed to them they discharged very judiciously, by arranging the new portions in the order pointed out, without altering the text, and, except in a very few instances, without additions of their own; contenting themselves with adding some explanatory notes, consisting chiefly of references to the author's other works.

Some of the chapters are unfortunately mere fragments, but most of the others indicate very clearly Bastiat's opinions on the subjects to which they relate; and several of them—especially the chapters on Public and Private Services, Responsibility, Solidarity, Social Motive Force, and portions of others, which treat of what he has elsewhere called Social Harmonies, or Political Economy in its relations with Social Philosophy—display a breadth, a vigour, and an originality worthy of the best days of their lamented author.

Many of the questions purely economical which are here discussed,—such, for instance, as those of Wages, Population, and the

* NOTICE, etc., p. xxxviii., note.

relations of Labour and Capital, etc.,—are at this moment deeply engaging public attention in England, as well as on the other side of the Channel; and on subjects of such vast practical importance it is surely desirable that the opinions of so profound and fearless a thinker as Bastiat should be as widely disseminated as possible.

Having now completed the English edition of the *Harmonies Économiques*, I may perhaps be permitted to refer to the great interest taken in the translation by the late Mr Cobden, who was the correspondent and personal friend of Bastiat, and was, I need not say, so eminently qualified to form and pronounce an opinion on the merits of his last great work. A short time after the appearance of Part I. (26th March 1860), writing from Paris, where he was then engaged in negotiating the Commercial Treaty, Mr Cobden says:—

"My enthusiasm for Bastiat, founded as much on a love of his personal qualities as on an admiration for his genius, dates back nearly twenty years; I need not, therefore, express any astonishment at the warmth with which you speak of his productions. They are doing their work silently but effectually. M. Guillaumin [the eminent publisher] tells me the sale of the last edition has been steady and continuous, and a new one is now in hand. The works of Bastiat, which are selling not only in France, but throughout Europe, are gradually teaching those who by their commanding talents are capable of becoming the teachers of others; for Bastiat speaks with the greatest force to the highest order of intellects. At the same time, he is almost the only Political Economist whose style is brilliant and fascinating, whilst his irresistible logic is relieved by sallies of wit and humour which make his *Sophismes* as amusing as a novel. No critic who has read Bastiat will dare to apply again to Political Economy the sarcastic epithet of the 'dreary science.' His fame is so well established, that I think it would be presumptuous to do anything to increase it by any other means than the silent but certain dissemination of his works by the force of their own great merits."

A General Index has now been added, which will facilitate reference to both parts of the work.

P. J. S.

HARMONIES

OF

POLITICAL ECONOMY.

PART II.

XI.

PRODUCER—CONSUMER.

If the level of the human race is not continually rising, man is not a perfectible being.

If the social tendency is not a constant approximation of all men towards this progressive elevation, the economic laws are not harmonious.

Now, how can the level of humanity be rising, if each given quantity of labour does not yield a constantly increasing amount of enjoyments, a phenomenon which can be explained only by the transformation of onerous into gratuitous utility?

And, on the other hand, how can this utility, having become gratuitous, bring men nearer and nearer to a common level, if the utility has not at the same time itself become common?

Here, then, we discover the essential law of social harmony.

I should have been pleased had the language of Political Economy furnished me with two words other than the terms *production* and *consumption*, to designate services which are rendered and received. These terms savour too much of materiality. There are evidently services, like those of the clergyman, the professor, the soldier, the artist, which tend to the furtherance of morality, education, security, taste, which have nothing in common with mechanical or manu-

facturing industry, except this, that the end to be attained is *satisfaction* or enjoyment.

The terms I have referred to are those generally employed, and I have no wish to become a neologist. But let it be understood that by *production* I mean what confers utility, and by *consumption* the enjoyment to which that utility gives rise.

Let the protectionist school—which is in reality a phase of Communism—believe that in employing the terms *producer* and *consumer* we are not absurd enough to wish to represent the human race as divided into two distinct classes, the one engaged exclusively in the work of producing, the other exclusively in that of consuming. The naturalist divides the human race into whites and blacks, or into men and women, and the economist, forsooth, is not to classify them as producers and consumers, because, as the protectionist gentlemen sagely remark, *producer and consumer make but one person!*

Why, it is for the very reason that they do make but one that each individual comes to be considered by the science of Political Economy in this double capacity. Our business is not to divide the human race into two classes, but to study man under two very different aspects. If the protectionists were to forbid grammarians to employ the pronouns *I* and *thou*, on the pretext that every man is in turn *the person speaking* and *the person spoken to*, it would be a sufficient answer to say, that although it be perfectly true that we cannot place all the tongues on one side, and all the ears on the other, since every man has both ears and a tongue, it by no means follows that, with reference to each proposition enunciated, the tongue does not pertain to one man and the ear to another. In the same way, *with reference to every service*, the man who renders it is quite distinct from the man who receives it. The producer and consumer are always set opposite each other, so much so that they have always a controversy.

The very people who object to our studying mankind under the double aspect of producers and consumers have no difficulty in making this distinction when they address themselves to legislative assemblies. We then find them demanding monopoly or freedom of trade, according as the matter in dispute refers to a commodity which they sell, or a commodity which they purchase.

Without dwelling longer, then, on this preliminary exception taken by the protectionists, let us acknowledge that in the social order the separation of employments causes each man to occupy

two situations, sufficiently distinct to render their action and relations worthy of our study.

In general, we devote ourselves to some special trade, profession, or career, and it is not from that particular source that we expect to derive our satisfactions. We render and receive services; we supply and demand values; we make purchases and sales; we work for others, and others work for us: in short, we are *producers and consumers.*

According as we present ourselves in the market in one or other of these capacities, we carry thither a spirit which is very different, or rather, I should say, very opposite. Suppose, for example, that corn is the subject of the transaction. The same man has very different views when he goes to market as a purchaser, from what he has when he goes there as a seller. As a purchaser, he desires abundance; as a seller, scarcity. In either case, these desires may be traced to the same source—personal interest; but as to sell or buy, to give or to receive, to supply or to demand, are acts as opposite as possible, they cannot but give rise, and from the same motive, to opposite desires.

Antagonistic desires cannot at one and the same time coincide with the general good.

In another work,* I have endeavoured to show that the wishes or desires of men in their capacity of consumers are those which are in harmony with the public interest; and it cannot be otherwise. For seeing that enjoyment is the end and design of labour, and that the labour is determined only by the obstacle to be overcome, it is evident that labour is in this sense an *evil*, and that everything should tend to diminish it; that enjoyment is a *good*, and that everything should tend to increase it.

And here presents itself the great, the perpetual, the deplorable illusion which springs from the erroneous definition of *value*, and from confounding value with *utility*.

Value being simply a relation, is of as much greater importance to each individual as it is of less importance to society at large.

What renders service to the masses is utility alone; and value is not at all the measure of it.

What renders service to the individual is still only utility. But value is the measure of it; for, with each determinate value, he obtains from society the utility of his choice, in the proportion of that value.

* *Sophismes Economiques*, chap. i. (1st series).

If we regard man as an isolated being, it is as clear as day that consumption, and not production, is the essential thing; for consumption to a certain extent implies labour, but labour does not imply consumption.

The separation of employments has led certain economists to measure the general prosperity, not by consumption, but by labour. And by following these economists we have come to this strange subversion of principle, to favour labour at the expense of its results.

The reasoning has been this: The more difficulties are overcome the better. Then augment the difficulties to be conquered.

The error of this reasoning is manifest.

No doubt, a certain amount of difficulties being given, it is fortunate that a certain quantity of labour also given should surmount as many of these difficulties as possible. But to diminish the power of the labour or augment that of the difficulties, in order to increase value, is positively monstrous.

An individual member of society is interested in this, that his services, while preserving even the same degree of utility, should increase in value. Suppose his desires in this respect to be realized, it is easy to perceive what will happen. He is better off, but his brethren are worse off, seeing that the total amount of utility has not been increased.

We cannot then reason from particulars to generals, and say: Pursue such measures as in their result will satisfy the desire which all individuals entertain to see the value of their services augmented.

Value being a relation, we should have accomplished nothing if the increase in all departments were proportionate to the anterior value; if it were arbitrary and unequal for different services, we should have done nothing but introduce injustice into the distribution of utilities.

It is of the nature of every bargain or mercantile transaction to give rise to a *debate*. But by using this word debate, shall I not bring down upon myself all the sentimental schools which are nowadays so numerous? *Debate* implies *antagonism*, it will be said. You admit, then, that antagonism is the natural state of society. Here again I have to break another lance; for in this country economic science is so little understood, that one cannot make use of a word without raising up an opponent.

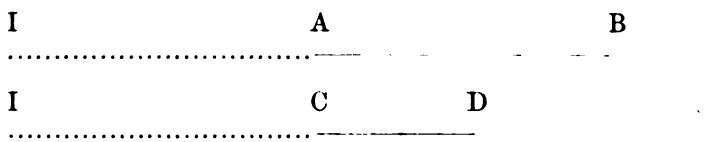
I have been justly reproached for using the phrase that "Between

the seller and buyer there exists a radical antagonism." The word *antagonism*, when strengthened by the word *radical*, implies much more than I meant to express. It would seem to imply a permanent opposition of interests, consequently an indestructible social dissonance; while what I wished to indicate was merely that transient debate or discussion which precedes every commercial transaction, and which is inherent in the very idea of a bargain.

As long as, to the regret of the sentimental utopiast, there shall remain a vestige of liberty in the world, buyers and sellers will discuss their interests, and higgle about prices; nor will the social laws cease to be harmonious on that account. Is it possible to conceive that the man who *offers* and the man who *demands* a service should meet each other in the market without having for the moment a different idea of its *value?* Is that to set the world on fire? Must all commercial transactions, all exchanges, all barter, all liberty, be banished from this earth, or are we to allow each of the contracting parties to defend his position, and urge and put forward his motives? It is this very free debate or discussion which gives rise to the equivalence of services and the equity of transactions. By what other means can our system-makers ensure this equity which is so desirable? Would they by legislation trammel the liberty of one of the parties only? Then the one must be in the power of the other. Would they take away from both the liberty of managing their own affairs, under the pretext that they ought henceforth to buy and sell on the principle of fraternity? Let me tell the Socialists that it is here their absurdity becomes apparent, for, in the long-run, these interests must be regulated and adjusted. Is the discussion to be inverted, the purchaser taking the part of the seller, and *vice versa?* Such transactions would be very diverting, we must allow. "Please, sir, give me only 10 francs for this cloth." "What say you? I will give you 20 for it." "But, my good sir, it is worth nothing—it is out of fashion—it will be worn out in a fortnight," says the merchant. "It is of the best quality, and will last two winters," replies the customer. "Very well, sir, to please you, I will add 5 francs—this is all the length that fraternity will allow me to go." "It is against my Socialist principles to pay less than 20 francs, but we must learn to make sacrifices, and I agree." Thus this whimsical transaction will just arrive at the ordinary result, and our system-makers will regret to see accursed liberty still surviving, although turned upside down and engendering a new antagonism.

determinate length; but the other is not susceptible of estimation or of measurement. No doubt in the production of a measure of wheat, of a cask of wine, of an ox, of a stone of wool, a ton of coals, a bundle of faggots, nature does much. But we have no means of measuring this natural co-operation of forces, most of which are unknown to us, and which have been in operation since the beginning of time. Nor have we any interest in doing so. We may represent gratuitous utility, then, by an indefinite line.

Now, let there be two products, the *value* of the one being double that of the other, they may be represented by these lines:—



IB, ID, represent the total product, general utility, what satisfies man's wants, absolute wealth.

IA, IC, the co-operation of nature, gratuitous utility, the part which belongs to the domain of community.

AB, CD, human service, onerous utility, *value*, relative wealth, the part which belongs to the domain of property.

I need not say that AB, which you may suppose, if you will, to represent a house, a piece of furniture, a book, a song sung by Jenny Lind, a horse, a bale of cloth, a consultation of physicians, etc., will exchange for twice CD, and that the two men who effect the exchange will give into the bargain, and without even being aware of it, the one, once IA, the other twice IC.

Man is so constituted that his constant endeavour is to diminish the proportion of effort to result, to substitute the action of nature for his own action; in a word, to accomplish more with less. This is the constant aim of his skill, his intelligence, and his energy.

Let us suppose then that John, the producer of IB, discovers a process by means of which he accomplishes his work with one-half the labour which it formerly cost him, taking everything into account, even the construction of the instrument by means of which he avails himself of the co-operation of nature.

As long as he preserves his secret, we shall have no change in the figures we have given above; AB and CD will represent the same values, the same relations; for John alone of all the world being acquainted with the improved process, he will turn it exclu-

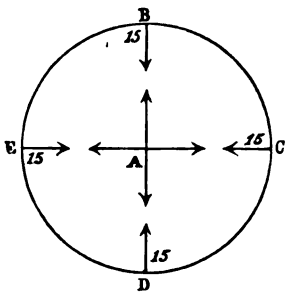
labour, value, compared with what it would have cost them before the intervention of natural forces. These forces, then, are gratuitous, and, moreover, common.

Since I have ventured to illustrate my argument by geometrical figures, perhaps I may be permitted to give another example, and I shall be happy if by this method—somewhat whimsical, I allow, as applied to Political Economy—I can render more intelligible to the reader the phenomena which I wish to describe.

As a producer, or as a consumer, every man may be considered as a centre, from whence radiate the services which he renders, and to which tend the services which he receives in exchange.

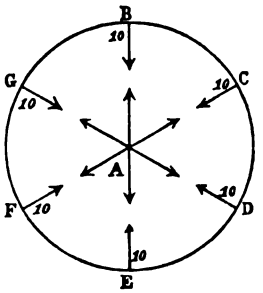
Suppose then that there is placed at A (Fig. 1) a producer, a copyist, for example, or transcriber of manuscripts, who here represents all producers, or production in general. He furnishes to society four manuscripts. If at the present moment the *value* of each of these manuscripts is equal to 15, he renders services equal to 60, and receives an equal value, variously spread over a multitude of services. To simplify the demonstration, I suppose only four of them, proceeding from four points of the circumference BCDE.

Fig. 1.



Value produced = 60
Value received = 60
Utility produced = 4

Fig. 2.



Value produced = 60
Value received = 60
Utility produced = 6

This man, we now suppose, discovers the art of printing. He can thenceforth produce in 40 hours what formerly would have cost him 60. Admit that competition forces him to reduce proportionally the price of his books, and that in place of being worth 15, they are now worth only 10. But then in place of four our workman can now produce six books. On the other hand, the fund of remuneration proceeding from the circumference, amount-

ing to 60, has not changed. There is remuneration for six books, worth 10 each, just as there was formerly remuneration for four manuscripts, each worth 15.

This, let me remark briefly, is what is always lost sight of in discussing the question of machinery, of free-trade, and of progress in general. Men see the labour set free and rendered disposable by the expeditive process, and they become alarmed. They do not see that a corresponding proportion of remuneration is rendered disposable also by the same circumstance.

The new transactions we have supposed are represented by Fig. 2, where we see radiate from the centre A, a total value of 60, spread over six books, in place of four manuscripts. From the circumference still proceeds a value, equal to 60, necessary now as formerly, to make up the balance.

Who then has gained by the change? As regards *value*, no one. As regards real wealth, positive satisfactions, the countless body of consumers ranged round the circumference. Each of them can now purchase a book with an amount of labour reduced by one-third. But the consumers are the human race. For observe that A himself, if he gains nothing in his capacity of producer,—if he is obliged, as formerly, to perform 60 hours' labour in order to obtain the old remuneration,—nevertheless, in as far as he is a consumer of books, gains exactly as others do. Like them, if he desires to read, he can procure this enjoyment with an economy of labour equal to one-third.

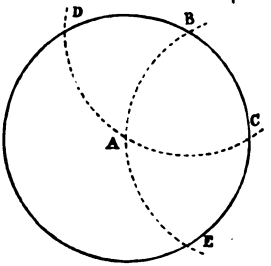
But if, in his character of producer, he finds himself at length deprived of the profit of his own inventions, by competition, where in that case is his compensation?

His compensation consists, 1*st*, in this, that as long as he was able to preserve his secret, he continued to sell 15 of what he produced at the cost of 10; 2*dly*, In this, that he obtains books for his own use at a smaller cost, and thus participates in the advantages he has procured for society. But, 3*dly*, His compensation consists above all in this, that just in the same way as he has been forced to impart to his fellow-men the benefit of his own progress, he benefits by the progress of his fellow-men.

Just as the progress accomplished by A has profited B, C, D, E, the progress realized by B, C, D, E has profited A. By turns A finds himself at the centre and at the circumference of universal industry, for he is by turns producer and consumer. If B, for example, is a cotton-spinner who has introduced improved ma-

chinery, the profit will redound to A as well as to C, D. If C is a mariner who has replaced the oar by the sail, the economy of labour will profit B, A, E.

Fig. 3.



In short, the whole mechanism reposes on this law :—

Progress benefits the producer, as such, only during the time necessary to recompense his skill. It soon produces a fall of value, and leaves to the first imitators a fair, but small, recompense. At length value becomes proportioned to the diminished labour, and the whole saving accrues to society at large.

Thus all profit by the progress of each, and each profits by the progress of all. The principle, *each for all, all for each*, put forward by the Socialists, and which they would have us receive as a novelty, the germ of which is to be discovered in their organizations founded on oppression and constraint, God himself has given us ; and He has educed it from liberty.

God, I say, has given us this principle, and He has not established it in a model community, presided over by M. Considérant, or in a *Phalanstère* of six hundred *harmoniens*, or in a tentative *Icaria*,* on condition that a few fanatics should submit themselves to the arbitrary power of a monomaniac, and that the faithless should pay for the true believers. No, God has established the principle *each for all and all for each* generally, universally, by a marvellous mechanism, in which justice, liberty, utility, and sociability are mingled and reconciled in such a degree as ought to discourage these manufacturers of social organizations.

Observe that this great law of *each for all and all for each* is much more universal than my demonstration supposes it. Words are dull and heavy, and the pen still more so. The writer is obliged to exhibit successively, and one after the other, with despairing slowness, phenomena which recommend themselves to our admiration only in the aggregate.

Thus, I have just spoken of *inventions*. You might conclude that this was the only case in which progress, once attained, escapes from the producer, and goes to enlarge the common fund of mankind. It is not so. It is a general law that every advantage of whatever kind, proceeding from local situation, climate, or any

* Allusion to Socialist works. See Part I., p. 176.

other liberality of nature, slips rapidly from the hands of the person who first discovered and appropriated it—not on that account to be lost, but to go to feed the vast reservoir from which the enjoyments of mankind are derived. One condition alone is attached, which is, that labour and transactions should be free. To run counter to liberty is to run counter to the designs of Providence; it is to suspend the operation of God's law, and limit progress in a double sense.

What I have just said with reference to the transfer of advantages holds equally true of evils and disadvantages. Nothing remains permanently with the producer—neither advantages nor inconveniences. Both tend to disseminate themselves through society at large.

We have just seen with what avidity the producer seeks to avail himself of whatever may facilitate his work; and we have seen, too, in how short a time the profit arising from inventions and discoveries slips from the inventor's hands. It seems as if that profit were not in the hands of a superior intelligence, but of a blind and obedient instrument of general progress.

With the same ardour he shuns all that can shackle his action; and this is a happy thing for the human race, for it is to mankind at large that in the long-run obstacles are prejudicial. Suppose, for example, that A, the producer of books, is subjected to a heavy tax. He must add the amount of that tax to the price of his books. It will enter into the value of the books as a constituent part, the effect of which will be that B, C, D, E must give more labour in exchange for the same satisfaction. Their compensation will consist in the purpose to which Government applies the tax. If the use to which it is applied is beneficial, they may gain instead of losing by the arrangement. If it is employed to oppress them, they will suffer in a double sense. But as far as A is concerned, he is relieved of the tax, although he pays it in the first instance.

I do not mean to say that the producer does not frequently suffer from obstacles of various kinds, and from taxes among others. Sometimes he suffers most seriously from the operation of taxes, and it is precisely on that account that taxes tend to shift their incidence, and to fall ultimately on the masses.

Thus, in France, wine has been subjected to a multitude of exactions. And then a system has been introduced which restricts its sale abroad.

It is curious to observe what skips and bounds such burdens

make in passing from the producer to the consumer. No sooner has the tax or restriction begun to operate than the producer endeavours to indemnify himself. But the *demand* of the consumers, as well as the supply of wine, remaining the same, the price cannot rise. The producer gets no more for his wine after, than he did before, the imposition of the tax. And as before the tax he received no more than an ordinary and adequate price, determined by services freely exchanged, he finds himself a loser by the whole amount of the tax. To cause the price to rise, he is obliged to diminish the quantity of wine produced.* . . . . . .

. . . . . .

The consumer, then,—the public,—is relatively to the loss or profit which affects in the first instance certain classes of producers what the earth is to electricity—the great common reservoir. All proceeds from it, and after some detours, longer or shorter as the case may be, and after having given rise to certain phenomena more or less varied, all returns to it again.

We have just shown that the economic effects only glance upon the producer, so to speak, on their way to the consumer, and that consequently all great and important questions of this kind must be regarded from the consumer's point of view if we wish to make ourselves masters of their general and permanent consequences.

This subordination of the interests of the producer to that of the consumer, which we have deduced from the consideration of *utility*, is fully confirmed when we advert to the consideration of *morality*.

Responsibility, in fact, always rests with the initiative. Now where is the initiative? In *demand*.

Demand (which implies the means of remuneration) determines all—the direction of capital and of labour, the distribution of population, the morality of professions, etc. *Demand* answers to Desire, while *Supply* answers to Effort. Desire is reasonable or unreasonable, moral or immoral. Effort, which is only an effect, is morally neuter, or has only a reflected morality.

Demand or Consumption says to the producer, "Make that for me." The producer obeys. And this would be evident in every case if the producer always and everywhere waited for the demand.

But in practice this is not the case.

Is it exchange which has led to the division of labour, or the

* See the author's discourse *Sur l'Impôt des Boissons*, in the second edition of the pamphlet entitled *Incompatibilités Parlementaires*.—EDITOR.

division of labour which has given rise to exchange? This is a subtle and thorny question. Let us say that man makes exchanges because, being intelligent and sociable, he comprehends that this is one means of increasing the proportion of result to effort. That which results exclusively from the division of labour and from foresight, is that a man does not wait for a specific request to work for another. Experience teaches him tacitly that demand exists.

He makes the effort beforehand which is to satisfy the demand, and this gives rise to trades and professions. Beforehand he makes shoes, hats, etc., or prepares himself to sing, to teach, to plead, to fight, etc. But is it really the supply which precedes the demand, and determines it?

No. It is because there is a sufficient certainty that these different services will be demanded that men prepare to render them, although they do not always know precisely from what quarter the demand may come. And the proof of it is, that the relation between these different services is sufficiently well known, that their value has been so widely tested that one may devote himself with some security to a particular manufacture, or embrace a particular career.

The impulse of demand is then pre-existent, seeing that one may calculate the intensity of it with so much precision.

Moreover, when a man betakes himself to a particular trade or profession, and sets himself to produce commodities, about what is he solicitous? Is it about the utility of the article which he manufactures, or its results, good or bad, moral or immoral? Not at all; he thinks only of its *value*. It is the demander who looks to the *utility*. Utility answers to his want, his desire, his caprice. Value, on the contrary, has relation only to the effort made, to the service transferred. It is only when, by means of exchange, the producer in his turn becomes the demander that utility is looked to. When I resolve to manufacture hats rather than shoes, I do not ask myself the question, whether men have a greater interest in protecting their heads or their heels. No, that concerns the demander, and determines the demand. The demand in its turn determines the value, or the degree of esteem in which the public holds the service. Value, in short, determines the effort or the supply.

Hence result some very remarkable consequences in a moral point of view. Two nations may be equally furnished with values, that is to say, with relative wealth (see Part I., chap. vi.), and very unequally provided with real utilities, or absolute wealth; and this happens when one of them forms desires which are more unreasonable

than those of the other—when the one considers its real wants, and the other creates for itself wants which are factitious or immoral.

Among one people a taste for education may predominate; among another a taste for good living. In such circumstances we render a service to the first when we have something to teach them; to the other, when we please their palate.

Now, services are remunerated according to the degree of importance we attach to them. If we do not exchange, if we render these services to ourselves, what should determine us if not the nature and intensity of our desires?

In one of the countries we have supposed, professors and teachers will abound; in the other, cooks.

In both, the services exchanged may be equal in the aggregate, and may consequently represent equal values, or equal relative wealth, but not the same absolute wealth. In other words, the one employs its labour well, and the other employs it ill.

And as regards satisfactions the result will be this; that the one people will have much instruction, and the other good dinners. The ultimate consequences of this diversity of tastes will have considerable influence not only upon real, but upon relative wealth; for education may develop new means of rendering services, which good dinners never can.

We remark among nations a prodigious diversity of tastes, arising from their antecedents, their character, their opinions, their vanity, etc.

No doubt there are some wants so imperious (hunger and thirst, for example) that we regard them as determinate quantities. And yet it is not uncommon to see a man scrimp himself of food in order to have good clothes, while another never thinks of his dress until his appetite is satisfied. The same thing holds of nations.

But these imperious wants once satisfied, everything else depends greatly on the will. It becomes an affair of taste, and in that region morality and good sense have much influence.

The intensity of the various national desires determines always the quantity of labour which each people subtracts from the aggregate of its efforts in order to satisfy each of its desires. An Englishman must, above all things, be well fed. For this reason he devotes an enormous amount of his labour to the production of food, and if he produces any other commodities, it is with the intention of exchanging them abroad for alimentary substances.

The quantity of corn, meat, butter, milk, sugar, etc., consumed in England is frightful. A Frenchman desires to be amused. He delights in what pleases his eye, and in frequent changes. His labours are in accordance with his tastes. Hence we have in France multitudes of singers, mountebanks, milliners, elegant shops, coffee-rooms, etc. In China, the natives dream away life agreeably under the influence of opium, and this is the reason why so great an amount of their national labour is devoted to procuring this precious narcotic, either by direct production, or indirectly by means of exchange. In Spain, where the pomp of religious worship is carried to so great a height, the exertions of the people are bestowed on the decoration of churches, etc.

I shall not go the length of asserting that there is no immorality in services which pander to immoral and depraved desires. But the immoral principle is obviously in the desire itself.

That would be beyond doubt were man living in a state of isolation; and it is equally true as regards man in society, for society is only individuality enlarged.

Who then would think of blaming our labourers in the south of France for producing brandy? They satisfy a *demand*. They dig their vineyards, dress their vines, gather and distil the grapes, without concerning themselves about the use which will be made of the product. It is for the man who seeks the enjoyment to consider whether it is proper, moral, rational, or productive of good. The responsibility rests with him. The business of the world could be conducted on no other footing. Is the tailor to tell his customer that he cannot make him a coat of the fashion he wants because it is extravagant, or because it prevents his breathing freely, etc., etc.?

Then what concern is it of our poor vine-dressers if rich diners-out in London indulge too freely in claret? Or can we seriously accuse the English of raising opium in India with the deliberate intention of poisoning the Chinese?

A frivolous people requires frivolous manufactures, just as a serious people requires industry of a more serious kind. If the human race is to be improved, it must be by the improved morality of the consumer, not of the producer.

This is the design of religion in addressing the rich—the great *consumers*—so seriously on their immense responsibility. From another point of view, and employing a different language, Political Economy arrives at the same conclusion, when she affirms that we

cannot check the *supply* of any commodity which is in *demand;* that as regards the producer, the commodity is simply a *value*, a sort of current coin which represents nothing either good or evil, whilst it is in the intention of the consumer that *utility*, or moral or immoral enjoyment, is to be discovered; consequently, that it is incumbent on the man who manifests the desire or makes the demand for the commodity to weigh the consequences, whether useful or hurtful, and to answer before God and man for the good or bad direction which he impresses upon industry.

Thus from whatever point of view we regard the subject, we see clearly that consumption is the great end of Political Economy; and that good and evil, morality and immorality, harmonies and dissonances, all come to centre in the consumer, for he represents mankind at large.

XII.

THE TWO APHORISMS.

MODERN moralists who oppose the maxim, *Chacun pour tous, tous pour chacun,* to the old proverb, *Chacun pour soi, chacun chez soi,* have formed a very incomplete, and for that reason a very false, and, I would add, a very melancholy idea of Society.

Let us eliminate, in the first place, from these two celebrated sayings what is superfluous. *All for each* is a redundancy, introduced from love of antithesis, for it is expressly included in *each for all.* As regards the saying *chacun chez soi,* the idea has no direct relation with the others; but, as it is of great importance in Political Economy, we shall make it hereafter the subject of inquiry.

It remains for us to consider the assumed opposition between these two members of the adages we have quoted, namely, *each for all—each for himself.* The one, it is said, expresses the sympathetic principle, the other the individualist or selfish principle. The first unites, the second divides.

Now, if we refer exclusively to the motive which determines the effort, the opposition is incontestable. But I maintain that if we consider the aggregate of human efforts in their results, the case is different. Examine Society, as it actually exists, obeying, as regards services which are capable of remuneration, the individualist or selfish principle; and you will be at once convinced that every man in working *for himself* is in fact working *for all.* This is beyond doubt. If the reader of these lines exercises a profession or trade, I entreat him for a moment to turn his regards upon himself; and I would ask him whether all his labours have not the satisfaction of others for their object, and, on the other hand, whether it is not to the exertions of others that he himself owes all his satisfactions.

It is evident that they who assert that *each for himself* and *each*

for all are contradictory, conceive that an incompatibility exists between individualism and association. They think that *each for himself* implies isolation, or a tendency to isolation; that personal interest divides men, in place of uniting them, and that this principle tends to that of *each by himself*, that is to say, to the absence of all social relations.

In taking this view, I repeat, they form a false, because incomplete idea of society. Even when moved only by personal interest, men seek to draw nearer each other, to combine their efforts, to unite their forces, to work for one another, to render reciprocal services, to *associate*. It would not be correct to say that they act in this way in spite of self-interest; they do so in obedience to self-interest. They *associate* because they find their account in it. If they did not find it for their advantage, they would not associate. Individualism, then, or a regard to personal interest, performs the work which the sentimentalists of our day would confide to Fraternity, to self-sacrifice, or some other motive opposed to self-love. And this just establishes the conclusion at which we never fail to arrive—that Providence has provided for the social state much better than the men can who call themselves its prophets. For of two things one; either union is injurious to individuality, or it is advantageous to it. If it injures it, what are the Socialist gentlemen to do, how can they manage, and what rational motive can they have to bring about a state of things which is hurtful to everybody? If, on the contrary, union is advantageous, it will be brought about by the action of personal interest, which is the strongest, the most permanent, the most uniform, the most universal, of all motives, let men say what they will.

Just look at how the thing actually works in practice. A *squatter* goes away to clear a field in the *Far West*. Not a day passes without his experiencing the difficulties which isolation creates. A second squatter now makes his way to the desert. Where does he pitch his tent? Does he retire *naturally* to a distance from the first? No; he draws near to him *naturally*—and why? Because he knows all the advantages that men derive, with equal exertion, from the very circumstance of proximity. He knows that on various occasions they can accommodate each other by lending and borrowing tools and instruments, by uniting their action, by conquering difficulties insurmountable by individual exertion, by creating reciprocally a market for produce, by interchanging their views and opinions, and by providing for their

common safety. A third, a fourth, a fifth squatter penetrates into the desert, and is invariably attracted by the smoke of the first settlements. Other people will then step in with larger capital, knowing that they will find hands there ready to be set to work. A colony is formed. They change somewhat the mode of culture; they form a path to the highway, by which the mail passes; they import and export; construct a church, a school-house, etc., etc. In a word, the power of the colonists is augmented by the very fact of their proximity, and to such a degree as to exceed, to an incalculable extent, the sum of their isolated and individual forces; and this is the motive which has attracted them towards each other.

But it may be said that *every man for himself* is a frigid maxim, which all the reasoning and paradoxes in the world cannot render otherwise than repugnant; that it smells of egotism a mile off, and that egotism is more than an evil in society, being itself the source of most other evils.

Now, listen a little, if you please.

If the maxim *every man for himself* is understood in this sense, that it is to regulate all our thoughts, acts, and relations, that we are to find it at the root of all our family and domestic affections, as fathers, sons, brothers, husbands, friends, citizens, or rather that it is to repress and to extinguish these affections, then I admit that it is frightful, horrible, and such, that were there one man upon the earth heartless enough to make it the rule of his conduct, that man dared not even proclaim it in theory.

But will the Socialists, in the teeth of fact and experience, always refuse to admit that there are two orders of human relations—one dependent on the sympathetic principle, and which we leave to the domain of morals,—another springing from self-interest, and regulating transactions between men who know nothing of each other, and owe each other nothing but justice,—transactions regulated by voluntary covenants freely adjusted? Covenants of this last species are precisely those which come within the domain of Political Economy. It is, in truth, no more possible to base commercial transactions on the principle of sympathy, than it is to base family and friendly relations on self-interest. To the Socialists I shall never cease to address this remonstrance: You wish to mix up two things which cannot be confounded. If you were fools enough to wish to confound them, you have not the power to do it. The blacksmith, the carpenter, and the labourer, who exhaust their strength in rude avocations, may be excellent fathers, admir-

able sons; they may have the moral sense thoroughly developed, and carry in their breasts hearts of large and expansive sympathy. In spite of all that, you will never persuade them to labour from morning to night with the sweat of their brow, and impose upon themselves the hardest privations, upon a mere principle of devotion to their fellow-men. Your sentimental lectures on this subject are, and always will be, powerless. If, unfortunately, they could mislead a few operatives, they would just make so many dupes. Let a merchant set to work to sell his wares on the principle of Fraternity, and I venture to predict that, in less than a month, he will see himself and his children reduced to beggary.

Providence has done well, then, in giving to the social state very different guarantees. Taking man as we find him,—sensibility and individuality, benevolence and self-love being inseparable,—we cannot hope, we cannnot desire to see the motive of personal interest universally eradicated—nor can we understand how it could be. And yet nothing short of this would be necessary in order to restore the equilibrium of human relations; for if you break this mainspring of action only in certain chosen spirits, you create two classes,—scoundrels whom you thus tempt to make victims of their fellow-men—and the virtuous, for whom the part of victims is reserved.

Seeing, then, that as regards labour and exchanges, the principle *each for himself* must inevitably have the predominance as a motive of action, the marvellous and admirable thing is, that the Author of all should have made use of that principle in order to realize, in the social order, the maxim of the advocates of Fraternity, *each for all.* In His skilful hand, the obstacle has become the instrument. The general interest has been intrusted to personal interest, and the one has become infallible because the other is indestructible. To me it would seem that, in presence of these wondrous results, the constructors of artificial societies might, without any excess of humility, acknowledge that, as regards organization, the Divine Architect has far surpassed them.

Remark, too, that in the natural order of society, the principle of *each for all,* based upon the principle of *each for himself,* is much more complete, much more absolute, much more personal, than it would be in the Socialist and Communist point of view. Not only do we work for all, but we cannot realize a single step of progress without its being profitable to the Community at large. (See Part I. chapter x., and *ante,* chapter xi.) The order of things

has been so marvellously arranged, that when we have invented a new process, or discovered the liberality of nature in any department —some new source of fertility in the soil, or some new mode of action in one of the laws of the physical world,—the profit is ours temporarily, transiently, so long as to prove just as a recompense, and useful as an encouragement,—after which the advantage escapes from our grasp, in spite of all our efforts to retain it. From individual it becomes social, and falls for ever into the domain of the common and the gratuitous. And while we thus impart the fruits of our progress to our fellow-men, we ourselves become participators in the progress which other men have achieved.

In short, by the rule *each for himself*, individual efforts, reinforced and invigorated, act in the direction of *each for all*, and every partial step of progress brings a thousand times more to society, in gratuitous utility, than it has brought to its inventor in direct profits.

With the maxim *each for all* no one would act exclusively *for himself*. What producer would take it into his head to double his labour in order to add a thirty-millionth part to his wages?

It may be said, then, why refute the Socialist aphorism? What harm can it do? Undoubtedly it will not introduce into workshops, counting-rooms, warehouses, nor establish in fairs and markets, the principle of self-sacrifice. But then it will either tend to nothing, and then we may let it sleep in peace, or it will bend somewhat that stiffness of the egotistical principle, which, excluding all sympathy, has scarcely right to claim any.

What is false is always dangerous. It is always a dangerous thing to represent as detestable and pernicious an eternal and universal principle which God has evidently destined to the conservation and advancement of the human race; a principle, I allow, as far as motive is concerned, which does not come home to our heart, but which, when viewed with reference to its results, astonishes and satisfies the mind; a principle, moreover, which leaves the field perfectly free to the action of those more elevated motives which God has implanted in the heart of man.

But, then, what happens? The Socialist public adopts only one-half the Socialist maxim—the last half, *all for each*. They continue as before to work *each for himself*, but they require, over and above, that all should work for them.

It must be so. When dreamers desired to change the grand

mainspring of human exertion, by substituting fraternity for individualism, they found it necessary to invent a hypocritical contradiction. They set themselves to call out to the masses,—"Stifle self-love in your hearts and follow us; you will be rewarded for it by unbounded wealth and enjoyment." When men try to parody the Gospel, they should come to a Gospel conclusion. Self-denial implies sacrifice and pain—self-devotion means, "Take the lowest seat, be poor, and suffer voluntarily." But under pretence of abnegation to promise enjoyment; to exhibit wealth and prosperity behind the pretended sacrifice; to combat a passion which they brand with the name of egotism by addressing themselves to the grossest and most material tendencies;—this is not only to render homage to the indestructible vitality of the principle they desire to overthrow, but to exalt it to the highest point while declaiming against it; it is to double the forces of the enemy, instead of conquering him; to substitute unjust covetousness for legitimate individualism; and, in spite of all the artifice of a mystical jargon, to excite the grossest sensualism. Let avarice answer this appeal.*

And is that not the position in which we now are? What is the universal cry among all ranks and classes? *All for each.* In pronouncing the word *each,* we are thinking of ourselves, and what we ask is to have a share which we have not merited, in the fruits of other men's labour. In other words, we systematize spoliation. No doubt, spoliation, simple and naked, is so unjust that we repudiate it; but, by dint of the maxim *all for each,* we allay the scruples of conscience. We impose upon others the *duty* of working for us, and we arrogate to ourselves the *right* to enjoy the fruits of other men's labour. We summon the State, the law, to impose the pretended *duty,* to protect the pretended *right,* and we arrive at the whimsical result of robbing one another in the sacred name of Fraternity. We live at other men's expense, and attribute heroism to the sacrifice. What an odd, strange thing the human mind is!

* When the van-guard of the Icarian expedition left Havre, I questioned some of these visionaries with a view to discover their real thoughts. *Competence easily obtained,* such was their hope and their motive. One of them said to me, "I am going, and my brother follows with the second expedition. He has eight children, and you see what a great thing it will be for him to have no longer to educate and maintain them." "I see it at once," I replied, "but that heavy charge must fall on some other body." To rid oneself of a burden and transfer it to the shoulders of another, such was the sense in which these unfortunate people understood the apophthegm of Fraternity—*all for each.*

and how subtle is covetousness! It is not enough that each of us should endeavour to increase his share at the expense of his fellows, it is not enough that we should desire to profit by labour that we have not performed; we persuade ourselves that in acting thus we are displaying a sublime example of self-sacrifice. We almost go the length of comparing ourselves to the primitive Christians, and yet we blind ourselves so far as not to see that the sacrifices which make us weep in fond admiration of our own virtue, are sacrifices which we do not make, but which, on the contrary, we exact.*

It is worth observing the manner in which this mystification is effected.

Steal! Oh fy, that is mean—besides it leads to the hulks, for the law forbids it. But if the law authorized it, and lent its aid, would not that be very convenient? . . . . What a happy thought! . . . .

No time is lost in soliciting from the law some trifling privilege, a small monopoly, and as it may cost some pains to protect it, the State is asked to take it under its charge. The State and the law come to an understanding to realize exactly that which it was their business to prevent or to punish. By degrees the taste for monopolies gains ground. No class but desires a monopoly. *All for each,* they cry; we desire also to appear as philanthropists, and show that we understand solidarity.

It happens that the privileged classes, in thus robbing each other, lose at least as much by the exactions to which they are subject, as they gain by the contributions which they levy. Besides, the great body of the working classes, to whom no monopolies can be accorded, suffer from them until they can endure it no longer. They rise up, and cover the streets with barricades and blood; and then we must come to a reckoning with them.

What is their demand? Do they require the abolition of the abuses, privileges, monopolies, and restrictions under which they suffer? Not at all. They also are imbued with philanthropy. They have been told that the celebrated apophthegm *all for each* is the solution of the social problem. They have had it demonstrated to them over and over again that monopoly (which in reality is only a theft) is nevertheless quite moral if sanctioned by law. Then they demand . . . . What? . . . . Monopolies! They also summon the State to supply them with education, employment,

* See the pamphlet *Spoliation et Loi*, p. 22 *et seq.*— EDITOR.

credit, assistance, at the expense of the people. What a strange illusion! and how long will it last? We can very well conceive how all the higher classes, beginning with the highest, can come to demand favours and privileges. Below them there is a great popular mass upon whom the burden falls. But that the people, when once conquerors, should take it into their heads to enter into the privileged class, and create monopolies for themselves at their own expense; that they should enlarge the area of abuses in order to live upon them; that they should not see that there is nothing below them to support those acts of injustice: this is one of the most astonishing phenomena of our age, or of any age.

What has been the consequence? By pursuing this course, Society has been brought to the verge of shipwreck. Men became alarmed, and with reason. The people soon lost their power, and the old spread of abuses has been provisionally resumed.

The lesson, however, has not been quite lost upon the higher classes. They find that it is necessary to do justice to the working class. They ardently desire to succeed in this, not only because their own security depends upon it, but impelled, as we must acknowlege, by a spirit of equity. Of this I am thoroughly convinced, that the wealthier classes desire nothing more than to discover the solution of the great problem. I am satisfied that if we were to ask the greater part of our wealthy citizens to give up a considerable portion of their fortune in order to secure the future happiness and contentment of the people, they would cheerfully make the sacrifice. They anxiously seek the means of coming (according to the consecrated phrase) *to the assistance of the labouring classes.* But for that end on what plan have they fallen? . . . Still the communism of monopolies; a mitigated communism, however, and which they hope to subject to prudential regulation. That is all—they go no farther. . . . . .

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XIII.

RENT.*

If, with an increase in the value of land, a corresponding augmentation took place in the value of the products of the soil, I could understand the opposition which the theory I have explained in the present work (Part I., chap. ix.) has encountered. It might be argued, "that in proportion as civilisation is developed the condition of the labourer becomes worse in comparison with that of the proprietor. This may be an inevitable necessity, but assuredly it is not a law of harmony."

Happily it is not so. In general those circumstances which cause an augmentation of the value of land diminish at the same time the price of landed produce. . . . . Let me explain this by an example.

Suppose a field worth £100 situated ten leagues from a town. A road is made which passes near this field, and opens up a market for its produce. The field immediately becomes worth £150. The proprietor having by this means acquired facilities for improvement and for a more varied culture, then increases the value of the land, and it comes to be worth £200.

The value of the field is now doubled. Let us examine this added value—both as regards the question of justice and as regards the utility which accrues, not to the proprietor, but to the consumers of the neighbouring town.

As far as concerns the increase of value arising from ameliorations which the proprietor has made at his own cost, there can be no question. The capital he has expended follows the law of all capital.

I venture to say the same thing of the capital expended in

* Two or three short fragments are all that the author has left us on this important subject. The reason is, that he proposed, as he has told us, to set forth the views of Mr Carey of Philadelphia, in opposition to the theory of Ricardo.—Editor.

forming the road. The operation is more circuitous, but the result is the same.

In point of fact, the proprietor has contributed to the public expenditure in proportion to the value of his field. For many years he contributed to works of general utility executed in more remote parts of the country, and at length a road has been made in a direction which is profitable to him. The gross amount of taxes which he has paid may be compared to shares taken in a Government enterprise, and the annual augmentation of rent which he derives from the formation of this new road may be compared to *dividends* upon these shares.

Will it be said that a proprietor may pay taxes for ever, without receiving anything in return? . . . . But this just comes back to the case we have already put. The amelioration, although effected by the complex and somewhat questionable process of taxation, may be considered as made by the proprietor at his own cost, in proportion to the partial advantage he derives from it.

I have put the case of a road. I might have cited any other instance of Government intervention. Security, for example, contributes to give value to land, like capital, or labour. But who pays for this security? The proprietor, the capitalist, the labourer.

If the State expends its revenue judiciously, the value expended will reappear and be replaced, in some form or other, in the hands of the proprietor, the capitalist, or the labourer. In the case of the proprietor, it must take the form of an increase in the value of his land. If, on the other hand, the State expends its revenue injudiciously, it is a misfortune. The tax is lost; and that is the taxpayer's look-out. In that case, there is no augmentation of the value of the land, but that is no fault of the proprietor.

But for the produce of the soil thus augmented in value, by the action of Government and by individual industry, do the consumers of the neighbouring town pay an enchanced price? In other words, does the interest of the £100 become a charge on each quarter of wheat which the field produces? If we paid formerly £15 for it, shall we now be obliged to pay more than £15? That is an interesting question, seeing that justice and the universal harmony of interests depend on its solution.

I answer boldly, *No.*

No doubt the proprietor will now get £5 more (I assume the rate of interest to be 5 per cent.); but he gets this addition at the ex-

pense of nobody. On the contrary, the purchaser will derive a still greater profit.

The field we have supposed having been formerly at a distance from the market, was made to produce little, and on account of the difficulty of transit what was sent to market sold at a high price. Now, production is stimulated, and transport made cheaper, a greater quantity of wheat comes to market, and comes there at less cost, and is sold cheaper. Whilst yielding the proprietor a total profit of £5, its purchaser, as we have already said, may realize a still greater profit.

In short, an economy of power has been realized. For whose benefit? For the benefit of both of the contracting parties. According to what law is this gain distributed? According to the law which we have described in the case of capital, seeing that this augmentation of value is itself capital.

When capital increases, the portion falling to the proprietor or capitalist increases in absolute value and diminishes in relative value; while the portion falling to the labourer (or consumer) increases both in absolute and relative value. . . . .

Observe how this takes place. In proportion as civilisation advances, lands which are situated near populous centres rise in value. Productions of an inferior kind in such places give way to productions of a superior description. First of all, pasture gives way to cereal crops, then cereal crops give way to market gardening. Products are brought from a greater distance at less cost, so that (and this in point of fact is incontestable) meat, bread, vegetables, even flowers, are sold in such places cheaper than in neighbourhoods less advanced, although manual labour costs more. . . . . .

LE CLOS-VOUGEOT.*

. . . . *Services are exchanged for services.* Frequently services prepared beforehand are exchanged for present or future services.

The value of services is determined not by the labour they exact or have exacted, but by the labour which they save.

Now, in point of fact, human labour goes on constantly improving in efficiency.

From these premises we may deduce a phenomenon which is very

* Celebrated vineyard of Burgundy.—TRANSLATOR.

important in social economy, which is, that *in general* anterior labour loses in exchange with present labour.

Twenty years ago I manufactured a commodity which cost me 100 days' labour. I propose an exchange, and I say to the purchaser, Give me in exchange a thing which cost you also 100 days' labour. Probably he will be in a situation to make this reply, That great progress has been made in twenty years. What you ask 100 days' labour for can be made now in 70 days. I don't measure your service by the time it has cost you, but by the service it renders me. That service is equal only to 70 days' labour, for in that time I can render it to myself, or find one who will render it to me.

The consequence is that the value of capital goes on continually deteriorating, and that anterior labour and capital are not so much favoured as superficial economists believe.

Apart from tear and wear, there is no machine a little old but loses value, for the single reason that better machines of the same kind are made nowadays.

The same thing holds in regard to land. There are few soils, to bring which into their present state of culture and fertility, has not cost more labour than would be necessary now with our more effective modern appliances.

This is what happens in the *usual* case, but not *necessarily* so.

Anterior labour may, at the present day, render greater services than it did formerly. This is rare, but it sometimes happens. For example, I store up wine which cost me twenty days' labour to produce. Had I sold it immediately, my labour would have yielded me a certain remuneration. I have preserved my wine; it has improved; the succeeding vintage has failed; in short, the price has risen, and my remuneration is greater. Why? Because I render a greater amount of service—my customers would have greater difficulty in procuring themselves such wine than I myself experienced—I satisfy a want which has become greater, more felt, etc. . . . . .

This is a consideration which must always be looked to.

There are a thousand of us. Each has his piece of land, and clears it. Some time elapses, and we sell it. Now it so happens that out of 1000 there are 998 who never receive as many days' present labour in exchange for their land as it cost them formerly; and this just because the anterior labour, which was of a ruder and less efficient description, does not render as great an amount

of service comparatively as present labour. But there are two of the proprietors whose labour has been more intelligent, or, if you will, more successful. When they bring their land to market, they find that it is capable of rendering service which cannot be rivalled. Every man says to himself, It would cost me a great deal to render this service to myself, therefore I must pay well for it, for I am quite certain that it would cost me more to obtain what I am in quest of by my own exertions.

This is just the case of the celebrated vineyard, the Clos-Vougeot, and it is the same case as that of the man who finds a diamond, or possesses a fine voice, or other personal advantages or peculiarities, etc. . . . . .

In my neighbourhood there is much uncultivated land. A stranger asks, Why not cultivate this field? Because the soil is bad. But here, alongside of it, you have another of the same quality which *is* cultivated. To this objection the native has no answer.

Was he wrong in the first answer he gave, namely, *It is bad?*

No. The reason which induces him not to clear new fields is not that they are bad, for there are excellent fields which also remain uncultivated. His reason is that it would cost him more to bring this field into the same state of cultivation as the adjoining field which is cultivated, than to buy the latter.

Now, to any thinking man this proves incontestably that the field has no intrinsic value.

(Illustrate this idea by considering it in various points of view.)*

* Of these intended developments none, unfortunately, exist; but we may be permitted to notice, briefly, the two principal consequences of the state of matters supposed by the author.

1. Two fields, the one cultivated, A, the other uncultivated, B, being supposed of identical quality, the amount of labour formerly devoted to the clearance of A is assumed as the necessary measure of the amount of labour required for the clearance of B. We may even say that, on account of our now superior knowledge of agriculture, of our implements, of our improved means of communication, etc., a *less* amount of labour would now be necessary to bring B into cultivation than was formerly required in the case of A. If land had value in itself, A would be worth all that it cost to bring it into culture, *plus something additional for its natural productive powers;* that is to say, much more than the sum now required to bring B into

the same state. Now it is just the reverse. The field A is worth less since we buy it rather than bring B into cultivation. In purchasing A, then, we pay nothing for the natural productive powers, since the price does not even compensate the original cost of bringing it into cultivation.

2. If the field A produces 1000 measures of corn, the field B when cultivated must be supposed to produce the same quantity. The reason why A was formerly cultivated was, that formerly 1000 measures of corn amply remunerated all the labour required both for its original clearance and its annual cultivation. The reason why B is not cultivated is, that now 1000 measures of corn would not remunerate the same amount of labour, or even a less amount, as we have just before remarked.

And what does this show? Evidently that the value of human labour has risen in relation to corn; that a day's labour is worth more wages estimated in corn. In other words, corn is obtained with less effort, and is exchanged for a less amount of labour; and the theory of *the progressive dearness of the means of subsistence is erroneous.*—EDITOR.

MONEY.*

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CREDIT.†

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XIV.

WAGES.

MEN are always anxiously on the outlook for something fixed. We meet sometimes with restless and unquiet spirits who have a craving for risk and adventure. But, taking mankind in the gross, we may safely affirm that what they desire is to be tranquil as regards their future, to know what they have to count upon, and be enabled to make their arrangements beforehand. To be convinced how precious fixity is in their eyes, we have only to observe how very anxious men are to obtain for themselves government employments. Nor is this on account of the honour which such places confer, for there are many of these situations where the work is not of a very elevated description, consisting in watching and vexing their fellow-citizens, and prying into their affairs. Such places, however, are not the less sought after—and why? Because they confer an assured position. Who has not heard a father speak

* See the author's brochure, *Maudit Argent.*—EDITOR.

† See the author's brochure, *Gratuité du Credit.*—EDITOR.

thus of his son: "I am soliciting for him a place as a candidate or supernumerary in such or such a government office. It is a pity, no doubt, that so costly an education is required—an education which might have ensured his success in a more brilliant career. As a public functionary he will not get rich, but he is certain to live. He will always have bread. Four or five years hence he will begin to receive a salary of thirty pounds a year, which will rise by degrees to a hundred and twenty or a hundred and sixty. After thirty years' service, he will be entitled to retire. His livelihood then is secured, and he must learn to live upon a small income," etc.

Fixity, then, has for most men an irresistible attraction.

And yet, when we consider the nature of man, and of his occupations, fixity would seem to be incompatible with them.

Go back in imagination to the origin of human society, and you will have difficulty in comprehending how men can ever succeed in obtaining from the community a fixed, assured, and constant quantity of the means of subsistence. Yet this is one of those phenomena which strike us less because we have them constantly before our eyes. We have public functionaries who receive fixed salaries; proprietors who can count beforehand on their revenues; men of fortune who can calculate on their dividends; workmen who earn every day the same wages. Apart from the consideration of money, which is only employed to facilitate exchanges and estimates of value, we perceive that what is fixed is the quantity of the means of subsistence, the value of the satisfactions received by the various classes of workmen. Now, I maintain that this fixity, which by degrees extends to all men and all departments of industry, is a miracle of civilisation, and a marvellous effect of that social state which, in our day, is so madly decried.

For, let us go back to a primitive social state, and suppose a nation of hunters, or fishers, or shepherds, or warriors, or agriculturists, to be told, "In proportion as you advance on the road of progress, you will know more and more beforehand what amount of enjoyment will be secured to you for each year," they would not believe us. They would reply, "That must always depend on something which eludes calculation,—the inconstancy of the seasons, etc." The truth is, they could form no idea of the ingenious efforts by means of which men have succeeded in establishing a sort of mutual assurance between all places and all times.

Now, this mutual assurance against all the risks and chances of

the future is entirely dependent on a branch of human science which I shall denominate *experimental statistics*. This department of science, depending as it does upon experience, admits of indefinite progress, and consequently the fixity of which we have spoken also admits of indefinite progress. That fixity is favoured by two circumstances which are permanent in their operation: 1*st*, Men desire it. 2*dly*, They acquire every day greater facilities for realizing it.

Before showing how this fixity is established in human transactions, in which it is little thought of, let us first of all see how it operates in a transaction of which it is the special object. The reader will, in this way, comprehend what I mean by experimental statistics.

A number of men have each a house. One of these houses happens to be burnt down and its owner is ruined. All the rest immediately take alarm, and each says to himself, "The same thing may happen to me." We cannot be surprised, then, that these proprietors should unite and divide the risk of such accidents as much as possible, by establishing a mutual assurance against fire. The bargain is very simple—here is its formula: "If the house of one of us is burnt down, the rest will club to make good the loss to the man who is burnt out."

By this means each proprietor acquires a double security; in the first instance he must take a small share in all losses of this nature; but then he is assured that he will never himself be obliged to suffer the whole loss arising from any such misfortune.

In reality, and if we extend the calculation over a great number of years, we see that the proprietor makes, so to speak, a bargain with himself. He sets aside a sufficient fund to repair the misfortunes which may afterwards befall him.

This is *association*. Indeed it is to arrangements of this nature that the Socialists give exclusively the name of *association*. Whenever speculation intervenes, association, as they think, disappears. It is improved and perfected, as I think, and as we shall afterwards see.

What has led the proprietors to associate, to enter into this mutual assurance, is the love of fixity, of security. They prefer known risks to risks which are unknown, a multitude of small risks to one great one.

Their design, however, has not yet been completely attained, and there is still much uncertainty in their position. Each of them

may say, "If accidents are multiplied, my *quota* will become insupportable. In any case, I should like to know beforehand, and to have insured in the same way my furniture, my merchandise, etc."

It would seem that such inconveniencies belong to the nature of things, and that it is impossible for men to get rid of them. After each step of progress we are tempted to think that all has been accomplished. How, indeed, can we elude this *uncertainty*, which depends upon accidents still unknown to us?

But mutual assurance has developed in the social state an experimental knowledge, namely, the average annual proportion between the values lost by accident and the values assured.

Having made all the necessary calculations, a company or an individual says to the proprietors, "In entering into a mutual assurance, you have wished to purchase freedom from anxiety, and the indeterminate quota which you reserve annually to cover accidents is the price which you pay for this immunity. But if you do not know what this price is beforehand, your tranquillity is never perfect. I now propose to you, therefore, another expedient. In consideration of a *fixed annual premium* which you shall pay me, I take upon myself all your chances of accidents. I will insure you all, and here is the capital which will guarantee the fulfilment of my engagement."

The proprietors accept the proposal, even although this fixed premium should amount to somewhat more than the sum which their mutual assurance cost them; for their object is not so much to save a few shillings as to obtain perfect repose and freedom from anxiety.

At this point the Socialists pretend that the principle of association is destroyed. For my part, I think it is improved, and on the road to other improvements to which I can see no limits.

But, say the Socialists, the assured have no longer any mutual tie. They no longer see each other and come to a common understanding. Intermediary parasites have come among them, and the proof that the proprietors are now paying more than is required to cover accidents is to be found in the fact, that the insurers obtain large profits.

It is not difficult to answer this objection.

First of all, association exists, but under another form. The premium contributed by the assured is still the fund which is to make good the losses. The assured have found the means of remaining in the association without taking part in its business.

This is evidently an advantage to each of them, seeing that the design they have in view is nevertheless attained; and the possibility of remaining in the association whilst they have their independence of movement and free use of their faculties restored to them, is just the characteristic of social progress.

As regards the profit obtained by the intermediate party, it is easily explained and justified. The assured remain associated for the purpose of repairing accidents and making good what is lost. But a company has stepped in which offers them the following advantages: 1*st*, It takes away whatever of uncertainty remained in the position of the assured; 2*dly*, It frees them from all care and trouble in connexion with accidents. These are *services*, and the rule is, service for service. The proof that the intervention of the company is a service possessed of value is to be found in the fact that it is freely accepted and paid for. The Socialists only make themselves ridiculous when they declaim against such middlemen. Do they intrude themselves into commercial transactions by force? Have they any other means of introducing themselves and their services than by saying to the parties with whom they deal, "I will cost you some trouble, but I will save you more"? How, then, can they be called parasites or even intermediaries?

I affirm, moreover, that association thus transformed is on the direct road of progress in every sense.

In fact, companies which expect to realize profits proportioned to the extent of their business, promote insurances. To aid them in this they have agents in all quarters, they establish credits, they devise a thousand combinations to increase the number of the assured—in other words, of the *associated* parties. They undertake a multitude of risks which were unknown to the primitive mutual insurance associations. In short, association is extended progressively to a greater number of men and things. In proportion as this development takes place, the companies find they can lower their prices; they are even forced by competition to do so. And here we again get a glimpse of the great law, that profit soon escapes from the hands of the producer to settle in those of the consumer.

Nor is this all: companies insure each other by reassurances, so that, with a view to providing for losses, which is the principal object in view, a thousand associations scattered over England, France, Germany, and America, are melted into one grand and unique association. And what is the result? If a house is burnt

down at Bordeaux, Paris, or elsewhere, the proprietors of the whole world, English, Belgians, Germans, Spaniards, club together and repair the disaster.

This is an example of the degree of power, universality, and perfection, which may be reached by means of free and voluntary association. But to attain this they must be left free to manage their own business. Now, what happened when the Socialists, those great partisans of association, were in power? Their chief business was to threaten association in every form, and principally association for insurance. And why? Just because, in order to render itself more universal, it adopted those expedients which left each of its members in a state of independence. How little these unfortunate Socialists understand the social mechanism! They would bring us back to the rude and primitive forms which association assumed when society was in its infancy, and they would suppress all progress under the pretext that it has departed from these forms.

We shall see, by-and-by, that from the same prejudices, the same ignorance, arise their incessant declamations against *interest*. The *interest* and *wages* are *fixed*, and, consequently, improved forms of remuneration for the use of labour and capital.

The wages-system [*salariat*] has been peculiarly the butt of the Socialists. They have almost gone the length of representing it as a modified, and not greatly modified, system of slavery and thraldom. At all events, they see in it only a bargain which is one-sided and leonine, founded on liberty merely in appearance, an oppression of the weak by the strong, or the tyranny of capital over labour.

Continually wrangling about new institutions to be founded, the Socialists display in their common hatred of existing institutions, and especially of the system of remuneration by wages, a striking unanimity. If they cannot attain unity as to the new social organization to be established, they are at least marvellously united in calumniating, decrying, running down, hating, and making hated, everything which actually exists. I have assigned the reason for this elsewhere.*

Much unfortunately takes place which is beyond the domain of philosophical discussion; and the Socialist propaganda, seconded by an ignorant and cowardly press, which, without avowing Socialism, seeks for popularity in fashionable declamations, has suc-

* See Part I., chapters i. and ii.

ceeded in instilling hatred of the wages-system into the minds of the very people who live by wages. Workmen have become disgusted with this form of remuneration. It appears to them unjust, humiliating, and odious. They think it brands them with the mark of servitude. They desire to participate on another principle in the distribution of wealth. Hence they have fallen passionately in love with the most extravagant Utopias. They had but one step to take, and they have taken it. When the revolution of February broke out, the grand object of the working classes was to get rid of wages. Upon the means of accomplishing this they consulted their oracles; but when these oracles did not remain mute, they followed the usual mode by giving obscure utterances, in which the word which predominated was *association*, as if *association* and *wages* were incompatible. Then the workmen would try all the forms of this liberty-giving association; and, to impart to it greater attraction, they were pleased to invest it with all the charms of Solidarity, and attributed to it all the merits of Fraternity. For the moment, one would have been led to believe that the human heart itself had been about to undergo a grand transformation, and to throw off the yoke of self-interest, in order to give place to the principle of sympathy. By a singular contradiction, they hoped from association to reap at once all the glory of self-sacrifice, and material profits of hitherto unheard-of amount. They fell down before the statue of Fortune, prayed, and decreed to themselves the glory of martyrdom. It seemed as if these workmen, thus misled, and on the point of being seduced into a career of injustice, felt it necessary to shut their eyes to their true position, to glorify the methods of spoliation which had been taught them by their apostles, and place them covered with a veil in the sanctuary of a new revelation. Never, perhaps, had so many and such dangerous errors, so many and such gross contradictions, found their way before into the human brain.

Let us inquire, then, what wages really are, and consider their origin, form, and effects. Let us trace the subject to its foundation, and make sure whether, in the development of humanity, wages constitute retrogression or progress—whether in receiving wages there be anything humiliating or degrading, or which can in any degree be allied with slavery.

Services are exchanged for services, labour, efforts, pains, cares, natural or acquired ability,—these are what we give and receive. What we confer on one another is satisfaction or enjoyment. What

determines the exchange is the common advantage, and its measure is the free appreciation of reciprocal services. The various combinations to which human transactions give rise have necessitated a voluminous economic vocabulary; but the words Profits, Interest, Wages, although indicating shades of difference, do not change the nature and foundation of things. We have still the *do ut des*, or rather the *facio ut facias*, which constitutes the basis of the whole economic evolution.*

The class which lives by wages forms no exception to this law. Examine the subject attentively. Do these men render services? Unquestionably they do. Are services rendered to them? Undoubtedly they are. Are these services exchanged freely and voluntarily? Do we perceive in this kind of transaction any appearance of fraud or violence? It is at this point, perhaps, that the grievances of the workman begin. They don't go the length of pretending that they are deprived of their liberty, but they assert that this liberty is merely nominal and a mockery, because the man whose necessities force the determination is not really free. It remains for us to inquire, then, whether the defect of liberty thus understood does not belong to the situation of the workman rather than to the mode of his remuneration.

When one man enters into the service of another, his remuneration may consist in a part of the work produced, or in a determinate wage. In either case he must bargain for this part of the product—for it may be greater or less,—or for this wage—for it may be higher or lower. If the man is in a state of absolute destitution, if he cannot wait, if he acts on the spur of urgent necessity, he must submit, and cannot get rid of the other's exactions. But you will observe that it is not the form of remuneration which gives rise to this dependence. Whether he runs the risk of the enterprise by stipulating for a share of the product, or bargains for a fixed remuneration whether the other gain or lose, it is his precarious situation which gives him an inferior position in the discussion which precedes the arrangement. Those innovators who have represented association to the working classes as an infallible remedy have misled them, and are themselves mistaken. They can convince themselves of this by observing attentively the circumstances in cases where the indigent workman receives part of the product in place of wages. There are assuredly no men in the country worse off than fishermen or vine-dressers, although they

* Part I., p. 146.

have the satisfaction of enjoying all the benefits which the Socialists denominate, exclusively, *association.*

But before proceeding to inquire into the circumstances which influence the quota of wages, I must define, or rather describe, the nature of the transaction.

Men have a tendency—which is natural, and, therefore, advantageous, moral, universal, indestructible—to desire security with reference to the means of subsistence, to seek fixity, and avoid uncertainty.

However, in the early stages of society uncertainty reigns supreme, and it has frequently astonished me that Political Economy has failed to mark the great and happy efforts which have been made to restrain this uncertainty within narrower and narrower limits.

Take the case of a tribe of hunters, or a nomad people, or a colony newly founded,—is there a single man who can say with certainty what to-morrow's labour will be worth? Would there not even seem to be an incompatibility between the two ideas, and that nothing can be of a more causal nature than the result of labour, whether applied to the chase, to fishing, or to agriculture?

It will be difficult, then, to find, in an infant society, anything which resembles stipends, salaries, wages, revenues, rents, interest, assurance, etc., which are all things which have been invented in order to give more and more fixity to personal situations, to get quit, to a greater and greater degree, of that feeling so painful to men of uncertainty with reference to the means of subsistence.

The progress which has been made in this direction is indeed admirable, although custom has so familiarized us with this phenomenon that we fail to attend to it. In fact, since the results of labour, and consequently the enjoyments of mankind, may be so profoundly modified by events, by unforeseen circumstances, by the caprices of nature, the uncertainty of the seasons, and accidents of every kind, we may ask how it comes to pass that so great a number of men find themselves set free for a time, and some of them for life, by means of rents, salaries, and retiring pensions, from this species of *eventuality,* of uncertainty, which would seem to be essentially part of our nature.

The efficient cause, the motive power of this beautiful evolution of the human race, is the tendency of all men towards competency and material prosperity, of which Fixity is so essential a part. The means consist in the substitution of a fixed unconditional bar-

gain for one dependent merely on appreciable chances, or the gradual abandonment of that primitive form of association which consists in committing all the parties concerned irrevocably to all the risks and chances of the enterprise; in other words, the improvement of association. It is singular at least that all our great modern reformers exhibit association to us as destroyed by the very element which inproves and perfects it.

In order that men should consent to take upon themselves, unconditionally, risks which fall naturally on others, it is necessary that a species of knowledge, which I have called *experimental statistics*, should have made some progress; for experience alone can place them in a situation to appreciate these risks, at least approximately, and consequently to appreciate *the value of the service* rendered in securing them against such risks. This is the reason why the bargains and transactions of rude and ignorant nations admit no stipulations of this nature, and hence, as I have said, uncertainty exercises over such people uncontrolled power. Were a savage, grown old, and having laid up some stock of game, to take a young hunter into his service, he would not give him fixed wages, but a share in the produce of the chase. How, indeed, could either of them, from the known infer the unknown? The teachings of past experience do not permit them to insure the future beforehand.

In times of barbarism and inexperience, men, no doubt, *associate*, for we have demonstrated that otherwise they could not exist; but association can assume among them only that primitive and elementary form which the Socialists represent as the only one which can secure our future safety.

When two men have long worked on together, encountering equal risks, there at length comes a time when, from experience, they can estimate and appreciate the value of these risks, and one of them consents to take the entire risk upon his own shoulders, in consideration of a fixed recompense.

This arrangement is undoubtedly a step of progress, and it is shown to be so by the very fact that it has been effected freely and voluntarily by the two parties, who would not have entered into it had it not been felt to be for their mutual benefit. It is easy to see in what the benefit consists. The one party gains by obtaining the exclusive management of an undertaking of which he takes all the risks upon himself; the other by attaining that fixity of position which is so much desired. And society at large must be

benefited by having an enterprise, formerly subjected to two minds and two wills, henceforth conducted with unity of views and unity of action.

But although association is modified in this way, it by no means follows that it is dissolved. The co-operation of the two men is continued, although the mode of dividing the product of their enterprise has been changed. Association is not vitiated by an innovation voluntarily agreed to, and which satisfies all parties.

The co-operation of anterior labour and present labour is always, or almost always, required in order to realize new means of satisfaction and enjoyment. Capital and labour, in uniting in a common undertaking, are, in the first instance, forced to undertake each its share of the risk; and this continues until the value of the risk can be experimentally estimated. Then two tendencies, which are alike natural to the human heart, manifest themselves—I mean the tendencies towards *unity of direction* and *fixity of situation.* Capital then says to labour: "Experience has taught us that your eventual profit amounts, on an average, to so much. If you wish it, I will ensure you this amount, and take charge of the operation, taking upon myself the chances of profit or loss."

Labour may possibly answer: "This proposal suits me very well. Sometimes I earn twenty pounds a year; sometimes I earn sixty. These fluctuations are very inconvenient, for they hinder me from regulating uniformly my own expenditure and that of my family. It is an advantage to me to get rid of this uncertainty, and to receive a fixed recompense of forty pounds."

By this arrangement the terms of the contract will be changed. They will continue to *unite their efforts,* and to *share the proceeds,* and consequently the association will not be dissolved; but it will be modified in this way, that the capitalist will take all the risks with the compensation of all the extraordinary profits, whilst the labourer will be secured the advantages of fixity. Such is the origin of Wages.

The agreement may take place in the reverse way. Frequently the person who undertakes a commercial enterprise says to the capitalist: "Hitherto we have worked together, sharing the risks. Now that we are in a situation to appreciate these risks, I propose to make a fixed bargain. You have invested a thousand pounds in the undertaking, for which one year you receive twenty-five pounds, another year seventy-five. If you agree to it, I will give you fifty pounds, or 5 per cent. per annum, and free you from all

risk, on condition that I have henceforth the entire management of the concern."

The capitalist will probably answer: "Since, with great and troublesome fluctuations, I receive, on an average, only fifty pounds per annum, I should much prefer to have that sum regularly assured to me. I shall, therefore, allow my capital to remain in the concern, but I am to be exempted from all risk. My activity and intelligence will now be free to engage in some other undertaking."

This is an advantage in a social, as well as in an individual point of view.

We see that men are constantly in quest of a fixed and stable position, and that there is an incessant effort to diminish and circumscribe on all sides the element of uncertainty. Where two men participate in a common risk, this risk, having a substantive existence, cannot be annihilated; but the tendency is for one of them to take that risk upon himself. If the capitalist undertakes the risk, the labourer's remuneration is fixed under the name of *wages*. If the labourer runs the chances of profit or loss, then the remuneration of the capitalist is fixed under the name of *interest*.

And as capital is nothing else than human services, we may say that *capital* and *labour* are two words which in reality express one and the same idea; and, consequently, the same thing may be said of *interest* and *wages*. Thus, where false science never fails to find antagonism, true science ever finds identity.

Considered, then, with reference to their origin, nature, and form, *wages* have in them nothing degrading or humiliating any more than *interest* has. Both constitute the return for present and anterior labour derived from the results of a common enterprise. Only it almost always happens that one of the two associates agrees to take upon himself the risk. If it be the present labour which claims a uniform remuneration, the chances of profit are given up in consideration of wages. If it be the anterior labour which claims a fixed return, the capitalist gives up his eventual chance of profits for a determinate rate of *interest*.

For my own part, I am convinced that this new stipulation which is ingrafted on the primitive form of association, far from destroying it, improves and perfects it. I have no doubt of this, when I consider that such a stipulation takes its rise from a felt want, from the natural desire of all men for stability; and, moreover, that it

satisfies all parties, without injury, but, on the contrary, by serving the interests of the public.

Modern reformers, who, under pretence of having invented association, desire to bring it back to its primitive and rudimentary forms, ought to tell us in what respect these *fixed bargains* are opposed to justice or equity, in what respect they are prejudicial to progress, and on what principle they wish to interdict them. They ought also to tell us why, if such stipulations bear the stamp of barbarism, they are constantly and more and more mixed up with that association which is represented as the perfection of human society.

In my opinion, such stipulations are among the most marvellous manifestations, as they are among the most powerful springs, of progress. They are at once the perfection and reward of a past and very ancient civilisation, and the starting point of a new and unlimited career of future civilisation. Had society adhered to that primitive form of association which saddles all the parties interested with a share of the risks of an enterprise, ninety-nine out of every hundred of such enterprises never would have been undertaken. The man who at the present day participates in a score of enterprises would have been tied down for ever to one. Unity of design and of will would have been wanting in all commercial operations; and mankind would never have tasted that precious good which is perhaps the source of genius—stability.

The *wages-system* [*salariat*], then, takes its rise in a natural and indestructible tendency. Observe, however, that it satisfies men's desires but imperfectly. It renders the remuneration of workmen more uniform, more equal, and brings it nearer to an average; but there is one thing which it cannot do, and which their admission to a participation in profits and risks could not accomplish, namely, to ensure them employment.

And here I cannot help remarking how powerful the feeling is to which I have made reference throughout the whole of this chapter, and the very existence of which our modern reformers do not seem even to suspect,—I mean men's aversion to uncertainty. It is exactly this very feeling which has made it so easy for Socialist declaimers to create such a hatred on the part of the working classes to receive their remuneration in the shape of wages.

We can conceive three phases in the condition of the labourer: the predominance of uncertainty; the predominance of stability;

and an intermediate state, from which uncertainty is partly excluded, but not sufficiently so to give place to fixity and stability.

What the working classes do not sufficiently understand is, that the association which the Socialists preach up to them is the infancy of society, the period when men are groping their way, the time of quick transitions and fluctuations, of alternations of plethora and atrophy—in a word, the period when absolute uncertainty reigns supreme. The wages-system, on the contrary, forms the intermediate link between uncertainty and fixity.

Now, the working classes, being far as yet from feeling themselves in a state of stability, place their hopes—like all men ill at ease—on a certain change of position. This is the reason why it has been an easy task for Socialism to impose upon them by the use of the grand term *association*. The working classes fancy themselves pushed forward, when they are in reality falling behind.

Yes, these unfortunate people are falling back to the primitive and rudimentary stage of the social movement; for what is the association now so loudly preached up to them but the subjection of all to all risks and contingencies? This is inevitable in times of ignorance, since fixed bargains presuppose some progress at least in experimental statistics. But the doctrine now inculcated is nothing else than a pure and simple revival of the reign of uncertainty.

The workmen who were enthusiasts for association when they knew it only in theory, were enchanted when the revolution of February seemed to render possible its practical adoption.

At that period many employers of labour, either infected with the universal infatuation, or giving way to their fears, offered to substitute a participation in the returns for payment by wages. But the workmen did not much fancy this solidarity of risk. They understood very well what was offered them; for in case the enterprise turned out a losing concern, they would have had no remuneration of any kind,—which to them was death.

We saw then what would not have been to the credit of our working classes, had the blame not lain with the pretended reformers, in whom, unhappily, they placed confidence. The working classes demanded a sort of bastard association in which the rate of wages was to be maintained, and in which they were to be entitled to a share of the profits without being subject to any of the losses.

The workmen would probably never of themselves have thought

of putting forward such pretensions. There is in human nature a fund of good sense and a feeling of justice to which such barefaced iniquity is repugnant. To corrupt man's heart, you must begin by depraving his intellect.

This is what the leaders of the Socialist school did not fail to do; and with this fact before us, I am frequently asked whether their intentions were not perverse. I am always inclined to respect men's motives; but it is exceedingly difficult, under such circumstances, to exculpate the Socialist chiefs.

After having, by the unjust and persevering declamations with which their books are filled, irritated the working classes against their employers, after having persuaded them that they were in a state of war, in which everything is fair against the enemy, they enveloped the ultimatum of the workmen in scientific subtleties, and even in clouds of mysticism. They figured an abstract being called Society which owed to each of its members a *minimum*, that is to say, an assured means of subsistence. "You have, then, a right," they told the workmen, "to demand a fixed wage." In this way they began by satisfying the natural desire of men for stability. Then they proceeded to teach them that, independently of wages, the workman should have a share in the profits; and when asked whether he was also to bear his share of the losses, their answer was, that in virtue of State intervention and the guarantee of the taxpayer, they had invented a system of universal industry, protected from all loss. By this means they removed all the remaining scruples of the unfortunate workmen; and when the revolution of February broke out, we saw them, as I have said, disposed to make three stipulations:—

1*st*, Continuance of wages;
2*d*, Participation in profits;
3*d*, Immunity from losses.

It may be said, perhaps, that these stipulations were neither so unjust nor so impossible as they appeared, seeing that they are introduced in many enterprises, having reference to newspapers, railways, etc.

I answer that there is something truly puerile in allowing oneself to be duped by high-sounding names applied to very trivial things. A little candour will at once convince us that this participation in profits, which some concerns allow to their workmen receiving wages, does not constitute association, or merit that title, nor is it a great revolution introduced into the relations of two

classes of society. It is only an ingenious and useful encouragement given to workmen receiving wages, under a form which is not exactly new, although it has been represented as an adhesion to Socialism. Employers who, in adopting this custom, devote a tenth, a twentieth, or a hundredth part of their profits, when they have any, to this *largesse* bestowed on their workmen, may make a great noise about it, and proclaim themselves the generous renovators of the social order; but it is really unworthy of occupying more of our time at present, and I return to my argument.

The system of payment by wages, then, was a step of progress. In the first instance, anterior labour and present labour were associated together with common risks, in common enterprises, the circle of which, in such circumstances, must have been very limited. If society had not discovered other combinations, no important work could ever have been undertaken. Men would have remained hunters and fishers, and there might have been perhaps some rude attempts at agriculture.

Afterwards, in obedience to the double feeling which prompts us to seek stability, and, at the same time, retain the direction of those operations of which we must encounter the risks, the two associates, without putting an end to the association, seek to supersede the joint hazard by a fixed bargain, and agree that one of them should give the other a fixed remuneration, and take upon himself the whole risk, along with the exclusive direction of the enterprise. When this fixity applies to the anterior labour, or capital, it is called *interest;* when it applies to the present labour, it is called *wages.*

But, as I have already said, wages serve only imperfectly to constitute a state of stability for a certain class of men, or of security in regard to the means of subsistence. It is one step, and a very marked one, towards the realization of this benefit, and so difficult that at first sight we should have thought it impossible; but it does not effect its entire realization.

And it is perhaps worthy of remark in passing, that fixity of situation, stability, resembles in one respect all the great results of which mankind are in pursuit. We are always approximating to such results, but we never fully attain them. For the very reason that stability is a good, a benefit, we must always be making efforts more and more to extend its domain; but it is not in our nature ever to obtain complete possession of it. We may even go the length of saying that to obtain such possession would

not be desirable for man in his present state. Absolute good of whatever kind would put an end to all desire, all effort, all combination, all thought, all foresight, all virtue. Perfection excludes the notion of perfectibility.

The working classes having then, with the lapse of time, and the progress of civilisation, reached the improved system of payment by wages, have not stopped short at that point, or relaxed their efforts to realize stability.

No doubt wages come in with certainty at the conclusion of the day's work; but when circumstances—as, for example, an industrial crisis, or a protracted illness—have interrupted work, the wages are interrupted also. What, then, is the workman to do? Are he and his wife and children to be deprived of food?

He has but one resource, and that is, to save, while employed, the means of supplying his wants in sickness and old age.

But, in the individual case, who can estimate beforehand the comparative length of time in which he has to assist, or be assisted?

What cannot be done in the individual case may be found more practicable with reference to the masses in virtue of *the law of averages*. The tribute paid by the workman while employed to provide for his support in periods of stoppage answers the purpose much more effectually, and with much more regularity and certainty, when it is centralized by association, than when it is abandoned to individual chances.

Hence the origin of *Friendly Societies*—admirable institutions which benevolence had given birth to long before the name of Socialism was ever heard of. It would be difficult to say who was their inventor. The true inventor, I believe, was the felt want of some such institutions—the desire of men for something fixed, the restless active instinct which leads us to remove the obstacles which mankind encounter in their progress towards stability.

I have myself seen friendly societies rise up spontaneously, more than five-and-twenty years ago, among the most destitute labourers and artisans of the poorest villages in the department of the Landes.

The obvious design of these societies is to equalize enjoyments, and to spread and distribute over all periods of life the wages earned in days of health and prosperity. In all localities in which they exist, these societies have conferred immense benefits. The contributors are sustained by a feeling of security, a feeling the

most precious and consolatory which can enter the heart of man in his pilgrimage here below. Moreover, they feel their reciprocal dependence and their usefulness to each other. They see at what point the prosperity or adversity of each individual, or of each profession, becomes the prosperity or adversity of all.

They meet together on certain occasions for religious worship, as provided by their rules; and then they are called to exercise over each other that vigilant surveillance so proper to inspire self-respect, which is the first and most difficult step in the march of civilisation.

What has hitherto ensured the success of these societies,—a success which has been slow, indeed, like everything which concerns the masses,—is liberty: of this there can be no doubt.

The natural danger which they encounter is the removal of the sense of responsibility. It is never without creating great dangers and great difficulties for the future, that we set an individual free from the consequences of his own acts.*

Were all our citizens to say, "We will club together to assist those who cannot work, or who cannot find employment," we should fear to see developed to a dangerous extent man's natural tendency to idleness; we should fear that the laborious would soon become the dupes of the slothful. Mutual assistance, then, implies mutual surveillance, without which the common fund would soon be exhausted. This reciprocal surveillance is for such association a necessary guarantee of existence—a security for each contributor that he shall not be made to play the part of dupe; and it constitutes besides the true morality of the institution. By this means, we see drunkenness and debauchery gradually disappear; for what right could that man have to assistance from the common fund who has brought disease and want of employment upon himself by his own vicious habits? It is this surveillance which re-establishes that responsibility which the association might otherwise tend to enfeeble.

Now, in order that this surveillance should operate beneficially, friendly societies must be free and select, and have the control of their own rules, as well as of their own funds. It is necessary also that they should be able to suit their rules to the requirements of each locality.

Suppose Government to interfere, it is easy to see the part which it would play. Its first business would be to lay hold of all

* See *post*, Chapter xx., on *Responsibility*.

these funds, under the pretence of centralizing them; and to give a colour to the proceeding, it would promise to enlarge the funds from resources taken from the taxpayer. "Is it not," it would be said, "very natural and very just that the State should contribute to so great, so generous, so philanthropic, so humane a work?" This is the first injustice—to introduce the element of force into the society, and, along with the contributions, to obtrude citizens who have no right to a share of the fund. And then, under pretence of unity, of solidarity, the State would set itself to fuse all these associations into one, subject to the same rules.

But, I would ask, what will become of the morality of the institution when its funds are augmented by taxation; when no one except a government official has an interest to defend the common stock; when every one, instead of feeling it his duty to prevent abuses, will take pleasure in favouring them; when all mutual surveillance has ceased; and when to feign disease would only be to play off a good trick on the Government? The Government, to do it justice, is well disposed to defend itself; but being no longer able to avail itself of private action, it must necessarily substitute official action. It will name examiners, controllers, inspectors. Countless formalities will be interposed between want and assistance. In short, what was originally an admirable institution will be transformed into a mere department of police.

The State will, in the first instance, perceive only the advantage of swelling the mob of its creatures, of multiplying the places at its disposal, and of extending its patronage and electioneering influence. It will not remark that in arrogating to itself a new function, it has assumed a new responsibility,—a responsibility which I venture to designate as fearful. For what must the immediate consequence be? The working classes will no longer regard the common fund as a property which they administer and keep up, and the limits of which are the limits of their rights. They will soon accustom themselves to regard assistance in cases of sickness or want of employment, not as proceeding from a limited fund, prepared by their own foresight, but as a debt due to them by society. Its resources will appear to them unbounded, and they will never be contented with their share. The State will find itself under the necessity of demanding constant additions to the budget. Encountering opposition in that, the Government will find itself involved in inextricable difficulties. Abuses will go on increasing, which, year after year, they will shrink from reforming,

until an explosion comes at last. And then it will be found that we have to deal with a population which can no longer act for itself, which expects everything from a minister or a prefect, even subsistence, and whose ideas are so far perverted as to have lost all rational notions of Right, Property, Liberty, or Justice.

Such are some of the reasons which alarmed me, I confess, when I saw lately that a Commission of the Legislative Assembly had been charged to prepare a project of law on friendly societies. It struck me that the hour of their destruction was approaching, and it afflicted me the more that I had thought a great future was in store for them, could we only preserve them in the bracing air of liberty. Is it then, I would ask, so very difficult a thing to leave men to make a trial, to feel their way, to make a choice, to find themselves mistaken, to rectify their mistakes, to inform themselves, to act in concert, to manage their own property and their own interests, to act for themselves on their own proper risk and peril, and on their own responsibility? Is it not evident that this is the way to make them really men? Shall we never cease to begin with the fatal hypothesis that all governors are guardians, and the governed only children?

I maintain that, left to the vigilance of the parties interested, our Friendly Societies have before them a great future, and I require no other proof of this than what has taken place on the other side of the Channel.

"In England, individual foresight has not waited for Government impulse to organize a powerful and reciprocal association between the working classes. For a long period, *free* associations, administering their own affairs, have been founded in all the principal towns of Great Britain," etc. . . . .

"The total number of these associations for the United Kingdom amounts to 33,223, including not less than 3,052,000 individuals—one half the adult population of Great Britain." . . . .

"This great confederation of the working classes, this institution of effective and practical fraternity, rests on the most solid basis. Their revenue is five millions sterling, and their accumulated capital amounts to eleven millions and two hundred thousand pounds."

"It is upon this fund that the contributors draw when out of employment. We are astonished to see how England rallies from the immense and profound perturbations which her gigantic industry experiences from time to time and almost periodically—and

the explanation of the phenomenon is, to a great extent, to be found in the facts now stated."

"Mr Roebuck wished, on account of the great importance of the question, that the Government *would assume the initiative* by taking the question into its own hands. . . . This was opposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer."

"Where individual interests are sufficient for their own free government, power, in England, judges it useless to interpose its action. It watches from above to see that all goes on regularly; but it leaves to every man the merit of his exertions, and the care of administering his affairs, according to his own notions and convenience. It is to this independence of her citizens that England assuredly owes a portion of her greatness as a nation." *

It might have been added that it is to that independence also that the citizens owe their experience and personal worth. To that independence, too, the English Government owes its relative freedom from responsibility, and consequently its stability.

Among the institutions which may take their rise from Friendly Societies, when they shall have made that advance which has scarcely yet been begun, I should give the first place, on account of their social importance, to the labourer's *Caisse de Retraite.*†

There are persons who treat such an institution as a chimera. Such people, no doubt, pretend to be acquainted with the extreme limits, as regards Stability, beyond which the human race is not permitted to go. I would ask them a few simple questions: If they had never known anything beyond the social state of those barbarous tribes who live by hunting and fishing, would they have been able to anticipate the existence, I do not say of our present land revenues, of Government funds, and fixed salaries, but even of the system of payment by wages, which is the first step towards fixity in the condition of the poorest classes? And then, if they had never seen anything beyond this wages-system, as it exists in countries which have not yet displayed the spirit of association, would they have ventured to predict the destinies reserved for *Friendly Societies* as we find them at work in our own day in England? Do they imagine that these first steps of progress were more easy than it is for us to establish *Caisses de Retraite?* Is this third step more difficult to take than the other two?

* Extract from *La Presse*, 22d June 1850.

† *Caisse de Retraite*,—A friendly accumulation society which has for object to provide for the labourer in his old age.—See an account of these *Caisses de Retraite* in *Dictionnaire de l'Économie Politique*, t. i. p. 255.—TRANSLATOR.

For myself, I see clearly that mankind thirst after stability. I see them, century after century, adding to their incomplete conquests, for the benefit of one class or another, and this by marvellous processes, which would seem to be much above individual invention, and I confess that I dare not venture to predict at what point men will stop short on the road of progress.

One thing is certain, that these *Caisses de Retraite* are universally, unanimously, ardently desired by all our workmen; and very naturally so.

I have frequently interrogated them, and I have always found that the great pain and grief of their existence is not the severity of their work, nor the smallness of their wages, nor even the irritation which the spectacle of inequality is calculated to excite. No, what affects them, discourages them, pains them, tortures them, is their uncertainty as regards the future. Whatever profession we may belong to, whether we are public functionaries, or men of independent fortune, or landed proprietors, or merchants, physicians, lawyers, soldiers, magistrates, we enjoy without perceiving it, consequently without acknowledging it, the progress which has been realized by Society—so that we cannot comprehend the torture of uncertainty. Let us place ourselves, then, in the situation of a workman, of an artisan who, on getting up every morning, is haunted by such thoughts as these: "I am young and robust; I work on, and sometimes harder than my neighbours, and have less leisure than they. And yet I have difficulty in providing for the modest wants of myself and of my wife and children. But what will become of me, what will become of them, when old age or disease shall have palsied my arm? To provide for those days of helplessness by saving from my wages would require self-control and prudence almost superhuman. Yet in spite of sickness, I have the prospect of enjoying happiness by means of a Friendly Society. Old age, however, is not an eventuality; it will come inevitably and without fail. Every day I feel its approach; it will soon overtake me; and then, after a life of honest labour, what prospect have I before me? For myself the garret, the hospital, or the jail; for my wife, beggary; for my daughter, worse still. Oh for some social institution which would compel me even by force, while still young, to secure a provision for old age!"

Such are the thoughts, feebly as I have expressed them, which every day, and every night, and every hour, haunt the terror-stricken imaginations of vast numbers of our fellow-men. And

when a problem presents itself under such conditions, you may be very sure that it is not insoluble.

If in their efforts to impart more stability to their future, the working classes have disseminated alarm among the other classes of society, it has arisen from their having given to these efforts a false, dangerous, and unjust direction. Their first idea, according to French custom, has been to attack the treasury; to found the *Caisses de Retraite* on the contributions of the taxpayer, and to bring into play the State and the Law, that is to say, to secure all the profits of spoliation without incurring the dangers, or bearing the shame of it.

It is not from this quarter of the social horizon that the institution so much desired by the working classes may be expected to come. The *Caisse de Retraite*, in order that its origin may be in keeping with its end and design, and to ensure its being useful, solid, and respectable, must proceed from the working classes themselves, must be the fruit of their exertions, their energy, their sagacity, their experience, their foresight. It must be supported by their contributions, and fed and nourished by their sacrifices. All they have to ask from Government is liberty of action and repression of fraud.

But has the time come when a *Caisse de Retraite* for the working classes is possible? I think it has. In order that an institution which brings new stability to the interests of a class should be established, a certain amount of anterior progress is necessary. It is necessary that a certain stage of civilisation should have been reached by the Society in the midst of which such an institution is to be established, a healthful atmosphere must be prepared for it. If I am not mistaken, it is to friendly societies, with the material resources which they create, and the spirit of association, the experience, the foresight, and the sense of dignity which they infuse into the working classes, that we are to owe the establishment of those kindred institutions which provide for the old age of the workman.

For if you observe what is going on in England, you will be satisfied that all such things are bound up together and depend upon each other, and that one step of progress, in order to be attainable, must be preceded by another step of progress.

In England all the adults to whom it is an object to join benefit societies have done so of their own accord; and that is a point of very great importance, seeing that operations of this kind require

to be conducted on a great scale, and according to the law of averages.

These societies are possessed of large accumulated capitals, and have, besides, considerable annual revenues.

We cannot help thinking that, with the advance of civilisation, the prodigious sums which these societies now require to pay to their members will become proportionally smaller and smaller.

Good health is one of the benefits which civilisation develops. The healing art makes progress; machinery performs the harder and more painful part of labour; longevity increases. All these causes tend to lessen the calls on such associations.

A still more decisive and infallible symptom is the disappearance of great commercial crises in England. Such convulsions have had their origin sometimes in sudden manias with which the English are now and then seized for enterprises which are more than hazardous, and which entail a great loss of capital; sometimes they arise from great fluctuations in the price of food, the consequence of restrictive laws, for it is evident that when the price of bread and butcher's meat is very high, all the resources of the people are absorbed in the purchase of necessaries, and other brances of trade languish, and a stoppage of manufactures is the inevitable result.

The first of these causes is now disappearing under the teachings of experience and public discussion; and we can already foresee that the English nation, which in former days threw itself into American loans, Mexican mines, and railway schemes with such sheep-like credulity, will now be much less a dupe than others to Californian illusions.

What shall I say of Free Trade, the triumph of which is due to Mr Cobden, not to Sir Robert Peel;—for the apostle would always have called forth a statesman, but the statesman could not have dispensed with the apostle. Here, then, we have a new power ushered into the world, which I hope will go far to do away with commercial stoppages and convulsions. Restriction has the admitted tendency and effect of placing many of the manufactures of the country, and, consequently, part of its population, in a precarious situation. As those piled-up waves which a transient force keeps for a moment above the level of the sea have a constant tendency to descend, so factitious industries, surrounded on every side by victorious competition, have a constant tendency to collapse. A modification in a single article of a single home or foreign tariff may bring ruin to them; and then comes a crisis. The varia-

tions in the price of a commodity, moreover, are much greater when you limit the field of competition. Surround a department, or a district, with custom-houses, and you render the fluctuation of prices much more marked. Liberty acts on the principle of insurance. In different countries, and in successive years, it compensates bad harvests by good ones. It sustains prices thus brought back to the average. It is a levelling and equalizing force. It contributes to stability, and it combats instability, which is the great source of convulsions and stoppages. There is no exaggeration in asserting that the first fruit of Mr Cobden's work will be to lessen many of those dangers which gave rise, in England, to friendly societies.

Mr Cobden has undertaken another task which will have a not less beneficial influence on the stability of the labourer's lot, and I doubt not he will succeed in it; for good service in the cause of truth is always triumphant. I refer to his efforts for the suppression of war, or, what is the same thing, for the infusion of the spirit of peace into that public opinion by which the question of peace or war comes always to be decided. War constitutes always the greatest disturbing force to which a nation can be subjected in its industry, in its commerce, in the disposal of its capital, even in its tastes. Consequently, it is a powerful cause of derangement and uneasiness to those classes who have difficulty in changing their employment. The more, of course, this disturbing force is lessened, the less onerous will the burdens be which fall upon benefit societies.

On the other hand, by dint of progress, by the mere lapse of time, the resources of these societies will be extended; and a day will come when they can undertake something more decisive—with a view to lessen the instability which is inherent in human affairs. These societies might then be transformed into *Caisses de Retraite*, or institutions for old age, and this will undoubtedly happen, since it is the ardent and universal desire of the working classes that it should be so.

And it is worthy of remark, that while material circumstances thus pave the way for such a transformation, moral circumstances arising from the influence of these very societies tend in the same direction. These societies develop among the working classes habits, qualities, and virtues, the possession and diffusion of which are in this respect an essential preliminary. When we examine the matter closely, we must be convinced that the creation of such

societies presupposes a very advanced stage of civilisation. They are at once its effect and its reward. They could, in fact, have no existence if men had not been previously in the habit of meeting, of acting in concert, and of managing in common their own affairs; they could not exist if men were prone to vices which induce premature old age; nor could they exist were the working classes brought to think that everything is fair as against the public, and that a common fund is the object at which every one intent on fraud may legitimately take aim.

In order that the establishment of *Caisses de Retraite* should not give rise to discord and misunderstanding, the working classes should be made to feel that they must depend upon nobody but themselves; that the common fund must be voluntarily created by those who are to have the benefit of it; and that it is supremely unjust and anti-social to call for co-operation from other classes, who are to have no share in the advantage, and who can only be made to concur by means of the tax-gatherer, that is to say, by means of force. Now, we have not yet got that length—so far from it that the frequent appeals to the State show us but too plainly what are the hopes and pretensions of the working classes. They think that their benefit society should be fed and alimented by State subventions like that for public functionaries. And thus it is that one abuse always gives rise to another.

But if these *Caisses de Retraite* are to be maintained exclusively by the parties interested, may it not be said that they exist already, seeing that life assurance companies present combinations which enable every workman to provide for the future by the sacrifice of the present?

I have dwelt at great length upon friendly societies and *Caisses de Retraite*, although these institutions are only indirectly connected with the subject of this chapter. I have given way to the desire to exhibit mankind marching gradually on to the conquest of stability, or rather (for stability implies something stationary), emerging victorious from their struggle with *uncertainty*—uncertainty, that standing menace which mars all the enjoyments of life, that sword of Damocles which seems so fatally suspended over the human destinies. That this menace may be progressively and indefinitely rendered less formidable by reducing to an average the risks and chances of all times, of all places, and of all men, is certainly one of the most admirable social harmonies which can be presented to the view of the philosophic economist.

We must not, however, conclude that this victory depends upon these two institutions, the establishment of which may be more or less accidental. No; did experience even demonstrate these institutions to be impracticable, the human race would not the less find its way to fixity. It is enough to know that uncertainty is an evil, in order to be assured that it will be incessantly, and, sooner or later, successfully, combated; for such is the law of our nature.

If, as we have seen, the system of remunerating labour by wages is, as regards stability, a more advanced form of association between capital and labour, it still leaves too much room for the uncertain. As long as he continues to work, the labourer knows on what he has to depend. But how long will he have employment, and how long will he be fit for work? This is what he is ignorant of, and, as regards his future, it places before him a fearful problem for solution. The uncertainty which affects the capitalist is different. With him it is not a question of life or death. "I shall always derive an interest from my means; but will that interest be higher or lower?" That is the question which affects capital or anterior labour.

Sentimental philanthropists who see in this a frightful inequality which they desire to get rid of by artificial, sometimes by unjust and violent, means, do not consider that after all we cannot change the nature of things. Anterior labour must necessarily have more security than present labour, simply for this reason, that products already created must always present more certain resources than products which are yet to be created; that services already rendered, received, and estimated, present a more solid foundation for the future than services which are still in the state of supply. If you are not surprised that of two fishermen, the one who, having long laboured and saved, possesses lines, nets, boats, and some previous supply of fish, is more at ease as regards his future than the other who has absolutely nothing but his willingness to take part in the work, why should you be astonished that the social order presents to a certain extent the same differences? In order to justify the envy, the jealousy, the absolute spitefulness with which the labourer regards the capitalist, it would be necessary to conclude that the relative stability of the one is caused by the instability of the other. But it is the reverse which is true. It is precisely the capital which pre-exists in the hands of one man which is the guarantee of the wages of another, however insufficient that guar-

antee may appear. But for that capital, the uncertainty of the labourer would be still greater and more striking. Would the increase, and the extension to all, of that uncertainty be any advantage to the labourer?

Two men run equal risks, which we may represent, for each, as equal to 40. One of them succeeds so well, by his labour and his foresight, that he reduces the risks which affect him to 10. Those of his companion from the same cause, and in consequence of a mysterious solidarity, are reduced, not to 10, but to 20. What can be more just than that the man who has the greater merit should reap the greater reward? What more admirable than that the other should profit by the virtues of his neighbour? Now, this is just what philanthropy repudiates under the pretext that such an order of things is opposed to equality.

Suppose that one fine day the old fisherman should thus address his companion: "You have neither boat, nor nets, nor any instrument to fish with, except your hands, and you are likely to make but a poor business of it. You have no stock of provisions, and it is poor work to fish with an empty stomach. Come along with me—it is your interest as well as mine. It is yours, for I will give you a share of the fish which we take, and, whatever the quantity be, it will at least be greater than the produce of your isolated exertions. It is my interest also, for the additional quantity caught with your assistance will be greater than the share I will have to give you. In short, the union of your labour with my labour and capital, as compared with their isolated action, will produce a *surplus*, and it is the division of this surplus which explains how association may be of advantage to both of us."

They proceed in this way in the first instance; but afterwards the young fisher will prefer to receive every day a fixed quantity of fish. His uncertain and fluctuating profits are thus converted into wages, without the advantages of association being destroyed, and, by stronger reason, without the association itself being dissolved.

And it is in such circumstances as these that the pretended philanthropy of the Socialists comes to declaim against the tyranny of boats and nets, against the situation, naturally less uncertain, of him who possesses them, and who has come to possess them just because he has constructed them in order to obviate this uncertainty! It is in such circumstances that they endeavour to persuade the destitute young fisherman that he is

the victim of his *voluntary* arrangement with the old fisherman, and that he ought instantly to return to his state of isolation!

To assert that the future of the capitalist is less uncertain than that of the workman, is just to assert that the man who already possesses is in a better situation than the man who does not yet possess. It is so, and it must be so, for it is for this very reason that men aspire to possess.

The tendency, then, is for men to cease being workmen in receipt of wages in order to become capitalists. This progress is in conformity with human nature. What workman does not desire to have tools of his own, a stock of his own, a warehouse, a workshop, a field, a dwelling-house, of his own? What workman but aspires to become an employer? Who is not delighted to command after having long obeyed? Do the great laws of the economic world, does the natural play of the social organs, favour or oppose this tendency? This is the last question which we shall examine in connexion with the subject of wages.

Can its solution be attended with any doubt?

Let us revert once more to the necessary evolution of production: gratuitous utility substituting itself incessantly for onerous utility; human efforts constantly diminishing in relation to each result, and, when rendered disposable, embarking in new enterprises; every hour's labour corresponding to an always increasing amount of enjoyment. How, from these premises, can we fail to deduce a progressive increase of *useful effects* to be distributed, consequently a sustained amelioration of the labourer's condition, consequently, also, an endless increase and progression of that amelioration?

For here the effect having become a cause, we see progress not only advance, but become accelerated by its advance; *vires acquirere eundo*. In point of fact, from century to century accumulation becomes more easy, as the remuneration of labour becomes more ample. Then accumulation increases capital, increases the demand for labour, and causes an elevation of wages. This rise of wages, in its turn, facilitates accumulation and the transformation of the paid labourer into a capitalist. Between the remuneration of labour and the accumulation of capital, then, there is a constant action and reaction, which is always favourable to the labouring class, always tending to relieve that class from the yoke of urgent necessity.

It may be said, perhaps, that I have brought together here all that can dazzle the hopes of the working classes, and that I have concealed all that could cause them discouragement. If there are

tendencies towards equality, it may be said, there are also tendencies towards inequality. Why do you not analyze the whole, in order to explain the true situation of the labouring classes, and thus bring science into accord with the melancholy facts to which it seems to shut its eyes? You show us gratuitous utility substituted for onerous utility, the gifts of God falling more and more into the domain of community, and, by that very fact, human labour obtaining a continually increasing recompense. From this increase of remuneration you deduce an increased facility of accumulation, and from this facility of accumulation a new increase of remuneration, leading to new and still more abundant accumulations, and so on *ad infinitum*. It may be that this system is as logical as it is optimist; it may be that we are not in a situation to oppose to it a scientific refutation. But where are the facts which confirm it? Where do we find realized this emancipation from paid labour? Is it in the great centres of manufactures? Is it among the agricultural labourers? And if your theoretical predictions are not accomplished, is not this the reason, that alongside the economic laws which you invoke, there are other laws which act in an opposite direction, and of which you say nothing. For instance, why do you tell us nothing of that competition which takes place among workmen, and which forces them to accept of lower wages; of that urgent want of the necessaries of life which presses upon the labourer, and obliges him to submit to the conditions of the capitalist, so that, in fact, it is the most destitute, famished, isolated, and consequently the most clamant and exacting workman who fixes the rate of wages for all? And if, in spite of so many obstacles, the condition of our unfortunate fellow-citizens comes to be improved, why do you not show us that law of population which steps in with its fatal action, multiplying the multitude, stirring up competition, increasing the supply of labour, deciding the controversy in favour of the capitalist, and reducing the workman to receive, for twelve or sixteen hours' labour, only *what is indispensable* (that, forsooth, is the consecrated phrase) *to the maintenance of life?*

If I have not touched upon all these phases of the question, the reason is, that it is scarcely possible to include everything within the limits of a single chapter. I have already explained the general law of Competition, and we have seen that that law is far from furnishing any class, especially the poorer class, with serious reasons for discouragement. I shall, by-and-by, explain

the law of Population, which will be found, I hope, in its general effects, not more severe. It is not my fault if each great solution—such, for example, as the future of a whole class of men—cannot be educed from one isolated economic law, and consequently from one chapter of this work, but must be educed from the aggregate of these laws, or from the work taken as a whole.

And here I must remind the reader of a distinction, which is by no means a subtlety, that when we have to do with an effect, we must take good care not to attribute it to the action of general and providential laws, if, on the contrary, it be found to proceed from a violation of these very laws.

I by no means ignore the calamities which, under all forms,—excessive labour, insufficient wages, uncertainty as to the future, a feeling of inferiority,—bear hard upon those of our fellow-citizens who have not yet been able, by the acquisition of Property, to raise themselves to a higher and more comfortable condition. But, then, we must acknowledge that uncertainty, destitution, and ignorance constitute the starting point of the whole human race; and this being so, the question, it seems to me, is to discover,—1*st*, If the general providential laws do not tend to relieve all classes from the weight of this triple yoke; 2*dly*, If the conquests already secured by the more advanced classes do not constitute a facility prepared beforehand for the classes which yet lag behind. If the answer to these questions be in the affirmative, we may conclude that the social harmony is established, and that the ways of Providence are vindicated, if, indeed, they needed vindication.

Man being endowed with discretion and free will, the beneficent laws of Providence can profit him only while he conforms himself to their operation; and although I affirm that man's nature is perfectible, I must not be understood to assert that he makes progress when he misunderstands or violates these laws. Thus, I maintain that transactions which are natural, free, voluntary, and exempt from fraud or violence, have in themselves a principle of progress for all. But that is not to affirm that progress is inevitable, and must spring from war, monopoly, or imposture. I maintain that wages have a tendency to rise, that this rise facilitates saving, and that saving, in its turn, raises wages. But if the class which lives by wages, in consequence of habits of dissipation and debauchery, neutralize at the outset this cause of progressive effects, I do not say that these effects will exhibit themselves in the same way, for the contrary is implied in my affirmation.

In order to bring the scientific deduction to the test of facts, we must take two epochs; for example, 1750 and 1850.

We must first of all establish what, at these two periods, was the proportion of *prolétaires* to *propriétaires*—of the men who live by wages without having any realized property, to the men in the actual possession of property. We shall find, I presume, that for a century the number of people who possess some resources has much increased relatively to the number of those who are in possession of no resources whatever.

We must then discover the specific situation of each of these two classes, which we cannot do otherwise than by observing the enjoyments and satisfactions which they possess; and very probably we shall find that in our day they derive a greater amount of real satisfaction and enjoyment, the one from accumulated labour, the other from present labour, than was possible in the middle of the last century.

If the respective and relative progress of these classes, especially of the working class, has not been what we could wish, we must then inquire whether it has not been more or less retarded by acts of injustice and violence, by errors, by passions—in a word, by faults incident to mankind, by contingent causes which we cannot confound with what are called the great and constant laws of the social economy. Have we not, for example, had wars and revolutions which might have been avoided? And have not these atrocities, in the first instance, absorbed and afterwards dissipated an incalculable amount of capital, consequently diminished the funds for the payment of wages, and retarded the emancipation of the working classes? Have they not diverted capital from its legitimate employment, seeking to derive from it, not enjoyment, but destruction? Have we not had monopolies, privileges, and unequal taxation? Have we not had absurd expenditure, ridiculous fashions, and a loss of power, which can be attributed only to puerile tastes and prejudices?

And what has been the consequence?

There are general laws to which man may conform himself, or which he may violate.

If it be incontestable that Frenchmen, during the last hundred years, have frequently run counter to the natural order of social development; if we cannot forbear to attribute to incessant wars, to periodical revolutions, to acts of injustice, to monopolies, to dissipation, to follies of all kinds, a fearful sacrifice of the power of capital and of labour;

Capital and labour are indispensable to one another. Perpetually confronting each other, their adjustment constitutes one of the most important and most interesting subjects which can come under the observation of the economist. And it is a solemn consideration that erroneous notions and superficial observations on this subject, if they become popular, may give rise to inveterate heartburnings, struggles, and bloodshed.

Now, I express my deliberate conviction when I say that for some years the public mind has been saturated with the falsest theories on this subject. We have been told that free and voluntary transactions between the capitalist and the labourer lead, not accidentally, but necessarily, to monopoly for the capitalist, and oppression for the labourer; from which the obvious conclusion is, that liberty ought everywhere to be put down and stifled; for, I repeat, that when men have accused liberty of engendering monopoly, they have pretended not only to assert a fact, but to establish a law. In support of this thesis they have appealed to the action of machinery and of competition. M. de Sismondi was, I believe, the founder, and M. Buret the propagator, of these unhappy doctrines, although the latter has stated his conclusions very timidly, and the former has not ventured to state any conclusion at all. But bolder spirits have succeeded them, who, after trumpeting their hatred to capitalists and men of property, after having got the masses to accept as an incontestable axiom the discovery that *liberty leads inevitably to monopoly*, have, whether designedly or not, induced the people to raise their hands against this accursed liberty.* Four days of a sanguinary struggle brought emancipation, without restoring confidence; for do we not constantly discover the hand of the State (obedient in this to vulgar prejudices) ever ready to interpose in the relations of capital and labour?

We have already deduced the action of competition from our theory of value, and we shall do the same thing as regards the effects of machinery.† We must limit ourselves in this place to an exposition of some general ideas upon the subject of the reciprocal relations of the capitalist and the labourer.

The fact with which our pessimist reformers are much struck in the outset is, that the capitalists are richer than the workmen, and

* *Émeutes* of June 1848.

† The chapter, "*Des Machines*," is one of those included in the author's list of intended additions, which he did not live to write. (See *Notice of Life and Writings*, etc., Part I., p. xxxviii.)—TRANSLATOR.

obtain a greater amount of satisfactions and enjoyments; whence it results that they appropriate to themselves a greater, and consequently an unjust, share of the product elaborated by their joint exertions. It is in this direction that their statistics, more or less impartial, professing to explain the condition of the working classes, tend.

These gentlemen forget that absolute poverty and destitution is the inevitable starting-point of the human race, and that men continue inevitably in this state until they have acquired something for themselves, or have had something acquired for them by others. To remark, in the gross, that capitalists are better off than mere workmen, is simply to assert that those who have something, have more than those who have nothing.

The questions which the workman ought to ask himself are not, "Does my labour give me much? Does it give me little? Does it give me as much as it gives to another? Does it give me what I desire?" The questions he should ask himself are these: "Does my labour give me less because I employ it in the service of the capitalist? Would it give me more if I worked in a state of isolation, or if I associated my labour with that of other workmen as destitute as myself? I am ill situated, but would I be better off were there no such thing as capital in the world? If the part which I obtain in consequence of my arrangement with capital is greater than what I would obtain without that arrangement, what reason have I to complain? And then, according to what laws would our respective shares go on increasing or diminishing were transactions free? If it be of the nature of these transactions to allow me, in proportion as the total product to be divided increases, to obtain a continually increasing proportion of the excess (Part I., c. vii., p. 183), then in place of breathing hatred against capital, ought I not to treat it as a friend? If it be indisputably established that the presence of capital is favourable to my interests, and that its absence would be death to me, am I very prudent or well-advised in calumniating it, frightening it away, and forcing its dissipation or flight?" In the discussion which precedes the bargain, an inequality of situation is constantly alleged, because capital can afford to wait, but labour cannot. The one upon which the greatest pressure bears must give way to the other, so that the capitalist in reality fixes the rate of wages.

Undoubtedly, looking at the surface of things, he who has created a stock, and who in consequence of this foresight can wait on, has

the advantage in the bargain. Taking even an isolated transaction, the man who says, *Do ut facias*, is not in such a hurry to come to a conclusion as the man who replies, *Facio ut des*. For, when a man can say *do*, he possesses something to give; and when he possesses something to give, he can wait.*

We must not, however, lose sight of this, that value has the same principle, whether it reside in the service or in the product. If one of the parties says *do*, in place of *facio*, it is because he has had the foresight to execute the *facio* beforehand. In reality, it is the service on both sides which is the measure of the value. Now, if delay for present labour is a suffering, for anterior labour it is a loss. We must not then suppose that the man who says *do*, the capitalist, will amuse himself (above all if we consider the aggregate of his transactions) by deferring the bargain. In point of fact, do we see much capital idle for this reason? Do many manufacturers stop their mills, or shipowners delay their voyages, or agriculturists defer their harvests, on purpose to depreciate wages, and get hold of their workmen by means of famine?

But without denying that the position of the capitalist in relation to the workman is favourable in this respect, is there not something else to be considered with reference to their arrangements? For instance, is it not a circumstance quite in favour of *present labour* that *accumulated labour* loses value by mere lapse of time? I have elsewhere alluded to this phenomenon. But it is important to solicit the reader's attention again to it in this place, seeing how great an influence it has upon the remuneration of present labour.

That which in my opinion renders Adam Smith's theory, that *value comes from labour*, false, or at least incomplete, is that this theory assigns to value only one element, whilst, being a relation, it has necessarily two. Besides, if value springs exclusively from labour, and represents it, it would be proportionate to that labour, which is contrary to all observed facts.

No; value comes from service received and rendered; and the service depends as much, if not more, on the pains saved to the man who receives it, as upon the pains taken by the man who renders it. In this respect the most common facts confirm our reasoning. When I purchase a product, I may indeed ask myself, "How long time has it taken to make it?" And this undoubt-

* For an explanation of these terms, borrowed from the Civil Law, see Part I., p. 146.—TRANSLATOR.

that such a product, a diamond for example, a violin of Stradivarius, a picture of Raphaël, a vine-plant from the Château-Laffitte, may come to exchange for a thousand times more labour than they cost. In fact it just comes to this, that the anterior labour is well remunerated in these cases, because it renders a great amount of service.

The contrary may also happen. A commodity which has cost four hours' labour may come to exchange for one which has cost only three hours' labour of equal intensity.

But—and this appears to me extremely important as regards the interests of the working classes, of those classes who aspire so ardently to get rid of their present state of uncertainty—although the two alternatives we have stated are both possible, and each may be realized in its turn, although accumulated labour may sometimes gain, and sometimes lose value, in relation to present labour, the first alternative, nevertheless, is so rare as to be considered accidental and exceptional; while the second is the result of a general law which is inherent in the very organization of man. That man, with all his intellectual and experimental acquisitions, is of a progressive nature, is, at least industrially speaking (for, in a moral point of view, the assertion might be disputed), beyond doubt. It is beyond doubt that the greater part of those commodities which exacted formerly a given amount of labour, exact at the present day a less amount, in consequence of improvements in machinery, and the gratuitous intervention of natural forces; and we may assert, without hesitation, that in each period of ten years, for example, a given quantity of labour will accomplish, in the majority of cases, greater results than the same quantity of labour could have accomplished in the preceding decennial period.

What is the conclusion to be drawn from this? Obviously, that anterior labour goes on constantly deteriorating in value relatively to present labour; that in every act of exchange it becomes necessary to give, of the first, a greater number of hours than you receive of the second; and this without any injustice, but simply to maintain the equivalence of services. This is a consequence which progress forces upon us.

You say to me, "Here is a machine; it was made ten years ago but it is still new. It cost 1000 days' work to make it. I will give it to you in exchange for an equal number of days' labour." To this I reply, "Within the last ten years so many new tools have been invented, and so many new processes discovered, that

I can now construct, or, what comes to the same thing, get constructed for me, an equally good machine, with an expenditure of only 600 days' labour. I will not, therefore, give you more than 600 for yours." "But I should in this way lose 400 days' labour." "No," I reply; "for 6 days' work now are worth 10 formerly. At all events, what you offer me for 1000 I can now procure for 600." This ends the debate; if the lapse of time has deteriorated the value of your labour, there is no reason why I should bear the loss.

Again you say to me, "Here is a field. In order to bring it to its present state of productiveness, I and my ancestors have expended 1000 days' labour. They were unacquainted, no doubt, with the use of axe, and saw, and spade, and did all by muscular exertion. But no matter; give me first of all 1000 of your days' work, as an equivalent for the 1000 which I give to you, and then add 300 as the value of the productive power of the soil, and you shall have the field." I answer, "I will not give you 1300, or even 1000, days' labour for it; and here are my reasons: There are on the surface of the globe an indefinite number of productive powers which are destitute of value. We are now accustomed to handle spade, and axe, and saw, and plough, and employ many other means of abridging labour, and rendering it more productive; so that, with 600 days' work, I can either bring an uncultivated field into the state in which yours is, or (which comes absolutely to the same thing, as far as I am concerned) *I can procure myself, by an act of exchange, all the advantages which you reap from your field.* I will give you, then, 600 days, and no more." "In that case, not only should I have no profit from the pretended value of the productive powers of the soil; I should not even be reimbursed for the actual labour which I and my ancestors have devoted to the cultivation of this field. Is it not strange that I should be accused by Ricardo of selling the powers of nature; by Senior of intercepting the gifts of God; by all the Economists of being a monopolist; by Proudhon of being a robber; while in reality I am only a dupe?" You are no more a dupe than a monopolist. You receive the equivalent of what you give; and it is neither natural, nor just, nor possible, that rude labour performed with the hand centuries ago should exchange, day for day, against the more intelligent and productive labour of the present time.

Thus we see that by an admirable effect of the social mechanism, when anterior and present labour are brought into juxtaposition,

and when the business is to know in what proportion the joint product of both is to be divided, the specific superiority of the one and of the other is taken into account; and they participate in the distribution according to the relative services which they render. In exceptional cases, it may happen that this superiority is on the side of anterior labour. But in the great majority of cases, it is otherwise; and the nature of man and the law of progress cause the superiority to be manifested on the side of present labour. Progress is advanced by the latter; and the deterioration falls upon capital.

Independently of this result, which shows how vain and hollow the declamations of our modern reformers on the pretended *tyranny of capital* are, there is another consideration still more fitted to extinguish in the hearts of the working classes that factitious hatred of other classes, which it has been attempted but with too much success to light up.

The consideration I refer to is this:

Capital, however far it may carry its pretensions, and however successful it may be in its endeavours to ensure the triumph of these pretensions, can never place labour in a worse situation than it would occupy in a state of isolation. In other words, capital is always more favourable to labour by its presence than by its absence.

Let us revert to the example which I gave a little ago.

Two men live by fishing. One of them has nets, lines, a boat, and some provisions to enable him to wait for the fruit of his labour. The other has nothing but his personal exertions. It is their interest to associate.* Whatever may be the terms on which they agree to share the produce, the condition of either of these two fishermen, whether the rich one or the poor one, never can be made worse, and for this obvious reason, that the moment either of them finds association disadvantageous as compared with isolation, he may return to isolation.

In savage as in pastoral, in agricultural as in industrial life, the relations of capital and labour are always represented by this example.

The absence of capital is a limit which is always within the power of labour. If the pretensions of capital go the length of rendering joint action less profitable for labour than isolated action, labour can take refuge in isolation, an asylum always open (except in a state of slavery) to voluntary association found to be disadvantageous. Labour can always say to capital, Rather

* See Part I., chapter iv.

than work jointly on the conditions which you offer me, I prefer to work alone.

It may be objected that this resource is illusory and ridiculous, that to labour isolated action is forbidden by a radical impossibility, and that to dispense with tools and instruments would be fatal to it.

This is no doubt true; but it just confirms the truth of my assertion, that even if capital carries its exactions to an extreme limit, it still benefits labour by the very fact of its being associated with it. Labour can be brought into a worse condition than the worst association only when all association ceases and capital retires. Cease, then, apostles of misfortune, to cry out against the tyranny of capital, since you allow that its action is always —in a greater or less degree, no doubt, but always—beneficent. Singular tyranny, whose power is beneficial to all those who desire to feel its effects, and is hurtful only when withdrawn.

But the objector may still insist that, although this might be so in the earlier stages of society, capital has at the present day invaded everything. It occupies every post, it lays hold of every field. The working man has no longer either air, or space, or soil to put his foot on, or stone to lay his head on, without the permission of capital. He is subject to its inexorable law, and you would afford him no refuge but isolation, which you admit is death!

All this displays a deplorable confusion of ideas, and a total ignorance of the social economy.

If, as has been said, capital has possessed itself of all the forces of nature, of all lands, of all space, I would ask for whose profit? For the profit of the capitalist, no doubt. But then, how does it happen that a simple workman, who has nothing but his muscular powers, can obtain in France, in England, in Belgium, a thousand, a million times greater amount of satisfaction and enjoyment than he could have reaped in a state of isolation,—not on the social hypothesis which you repudiate, but on that other hypothesis which you cherish and cling to, that which presupposes capital to have been guilty of no usurpation.

I shall continue to entertain this view of the subject, until your new science can give a better account of it; for I am convinced I have assigned valid reasons for the conclusion at which I have arrived.—(Part I., chapter vii.)

Take the first workman you meet with on the streets of Paris.

Find out the amount of his earnings and the amount of enjoyments he can procure himself, and when you have fired off both against that monster, capital, I will step in, and thus address the workman:

We are about to annihilate capital and all its works; and I am going to place you in the midst of a hundred thousand acres of the most fertile land, which I shall give you in full property and possession, with everything above and below ground. You will not be elbowed by any capitalist. You will have the full enjoyment of the four natural rights of hunting, fishing, reaping the fruits, and pasturing the land. True, you will have no capital; for if you had, you would be in precisely the situation you censure in the case of others. But you will no longer have reason to complain of landlordism, capitalism, individualism, usurers, stockjobbers, bankers, monopolists. The land will be absolutely and entirely yours. Think if you would like to accept this position.

This workman would, no doubt, imagine at first that he had obtained the fortune of a monarch. On reflection, however, he would probably say: Well, let us calculate. Even when a man possesses a hundred thousand acres of land, he must live. Now, how does the *bread* account stand in the two situations? At present I earn half-a-crown a day. At the present price of corn I can have three bushels a week, just as if I myself sowed and reaped. Were I proprietor of a hundred thousand acres of land, at the utmost I could not, without capital, produce three bushels of corn in two years, and in the interim I might die of famine. . . . . I shall, therefore, stick to my wages.

The truth is, we do not consider sufficiently the progress which the human race must have made, to be able even to maintain the wretched existence of our workmen.* . . . . . .

Amelioration of the labourer's lot found in wages themselves and in the natural laws by which wages are regulated.

1*st*, The labourer tends to rise to the rank of a capitalist and employer.

2*d*, Wages tend to rise.

Corollary.—The transition from the state of a paid workman to that of an employer becomes constantly less desirable, and more easy. . . . . .

* The manuscript brought from Rome stops here. What is subjoined was found among the papers left by the author in Paris. It indicates how he intended to terminate and sum up this chapter.—EDITOR.

XV.

SAVING.

To save is not to accumulate quantities of corn, of game, or of crown-pieces. This hoarding-up of material and consumable commodities, which must necessarily from its nature be restrained within narrow bounds, represents only *the saving* of man in a state of isolation. All that we have hitherto said of value, of services, of relative wealth, shows us that, socially, saving, although it proceeds from the same source, develops itself differently and assumes another character.

To save is to interpose voluntarily an interval between the time when we render services to society and the time when we receive back from society equivalent services. A man, for example, may every day, from the time he is twenty until he is sixty, render to his neighbours professional services equal to four, and demand from them services only equal to three. In that case he reserves the power of drawing upon society in his old age, and when he can no longer work, for payment of the remaining fourth of his forty years' labour.

The circumstance that he has received and accumulated through a succession of years notes of acknowledgment consisting of bills of exchange, promissory notes, bank notes, money, is quite secondary, and belongs only to the form of the transaction. It has relation only to the means of execution. It changes neither the nature nor the consequences of saving. The illusion to which the intervention of money gives rise in this respect is not the less an illusion, although we are almost always the dupes of it.

In fact, it is with difficulty that we can avoid believing that the man who saves withdraws from circulation a certain amount of value, and, in consequence, does a certain amount of harm to society.

And here we encounter one of those apparent contradictions

which are at war with logic, one of those barriers which would seem to oppose an insurmountable obstacle to progress, one of those dissonances which gives us pain by appearing to call in question the Divine power and will.

On the one hand, we know that the human race can only extend itself, raise itself, improve itself, acquire leisure, stability, and, by consequence, intellectual development and moral culture, by the abundant creation and persevering accumulation of capital. It is this rapid augmentation of capital on which depends the demand for labour, the elevation of wages, and, consequently, the progress of men towards equality.

But, on the other hand, *to save* is not the opposite of *to spend*, and if the man who spends gives a fillip to industry and additional employment to labour, does the man who saves not do exactly the reverse? If every one set himself to economize as much as possible, we should see labour languish in the same proportion, and if all could be saved, we should have no fund for the employment of labour.

In such circumstances, what advice can we give? And what solid basis can political economy offer to morals, when we appear to be able to educe from the former only this contradictory and melancholy alternative:—

"*If you do not save*, capital will not be replaced, but dissipated, the labouring class will be multiplied, while the fund for their remuneration will remain stationary; they will enter into competition with each other, and offer their services at a lower rate; wages will be depressed, and society will, in this respect, be on the decline. It will be on the decline also in another respect, for unless you save you will be without bread in your old age; you can no longer set your son out in the world, give a portion to your daughter, or enlarge your trade," etc.

"*If you do save*, you diminish the fund for wages, you injure a great number of your fellow-citizens, you strike a blow at labour, which is the universal creator of human satisfactions, and you lower, consequently, the general level of humanity."

Now these frightful contradictions disappear before the explanation which we have given of saving—an explanation founded upon the ideas to which our inquiries on the subject of value conducted us.

Services are exchanged for services.

Value is the appreciation of two services compared with each other.

In this view, *to save* is to have rendered a service, and allow time for receiving the equivalent service, or, in other words, to interpose an interval of time between the service rendered, and the service received.

Now, in what respect can a man do injury to society or to labour who merely abstains from drawing upon society for a service to which he has right? I can exact the value which is due to me upon the instant, or I may delay exacting it for a year. In that case, I give society a year's respite. During that interval, labour is carried on, and services are exchanged, just as if I did not exist. I have not by this means caused any disturbance. On the contrary, I have added one satisfaction more to the enjoyments of my fellow-citizens, and they possess it for a year gratuitously.

Gratuitously is not the word, for I must go on to describe the phenomenon.

The interval of time which separates the two services exchanged is itself the subject of a bargain, of an exchange, for it is possessed of *value*. It is the origin and explanation of *interest*.

A man, for instance, renders a present service. His wish is to receive the equivalent service only ten years hence. Here, then, is a value of which he refuses himself the immediate enjoyment. Now, it is of the nature of *value* to be able to assume all possible forms. With a determinate value, we are sure to obtain any imaginable service, whether productive or unproductive, of an equal value. He who delays for ten years to call in a debt, not only delays an enjoyment, but he delays the possibility of further production. It is on this account that he will meet with people in the world who are disposed to bargain for this delay. They will say to him: "You are entitled to receive immediately a certain value. It suits you to delay receiving it for ten years. Now, for these ten years, make over your right to me, place me in your room and stead. I shall receive for you the amount for which you are a creditor. I will employ it during these ten years in a productive enterprise, and repay you at the end of that time. By this means you will render me a *service*, and as every service has a value, which we estimate by comparing it with another service, we have only to estimate this service which I solicit from you, and so fix its *value*. This point being discussed and arranged, I shall have to repay you at the end of the ten years, not only the value of the service for which you are a creditor, but the value likewise of the service which you are about to render me."

It is the value of this temporary transference of values saved which we denominate *interest.*

For the same reason that a third party may desire that we should transfer to him, *for an onerous consideration,* the enjoyment of a value saved, the original debtor may also desire to enter into the same bargain. In both cases this is called *asking for credit.* To give credit is to give time for the acquittance of a debt, of a value; it is to deprive oneself of the enjoyment of that value in favour of another, it is to render a service, it is to acquire a title to an equivalent service.

But to revert to the economic effects of saving, now that we are acquainted with all the details of the phenomenon, it is very evident that it does no injury to general activity or to labour. Even when the man who economizes realizes his economy, and, in exchange for services rendered, receives hard cash, and hoards it, he does no harm to society, seeing that he has not been able to withdraw that amount of value from society without restoring to it equivalent values. I must add, however, that such hoarding is improbable and exceptional, inasmuch as it is detrimental to the personal interests of the man who would practise it. Money in the hands of such a man may be supposed to say this: "He who possesses me has rendered services to society, and has not been paid for them. I have been put into his hands to serve him as a warrant; I am at once an acknowledgment, a promise, and a guarantee. The moment he wills it, he can, by exhibiting and restoring me, receive back from society the services for which he is a creditor."

Now this man is in no hurry. Does it follow that he will continue to hoard his money? No; for we have seen that the lapse of time which separates two services exchanged becomes itself the subject of a commercial transaction. If the man who saves intends to remain ten years without drawing upon society for the services that are owing to him, his interest is to substitute a representative, in order to add to the value for which he is a creditor the value of this special service. Saving, then, implies in no shape actual hoarding.

Let moralists be no longer arrested by this consideration. . .

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XVI.

POPULATION.

I HAVE been longing to enter upon the subject of this chapter, were it for no other purpose than to have an opportunity of vindicating Malthus from the violent attacks which have been made upon him. It is scarcely credible that a set of writers of no reputation or ability, and whose ignorance is transparent in every page of their works, should, by echoing one another's opinions, have succeeded in lowering in public estimation a grave, conscientious, and philanthropic author; representing as absurd a theory which at all events deserves to be studied with serious attention.

It may be that I do not myself adopt all the opinions of Malthus. Every question has two phases; and I believe that Malthus may have fixed his regards too exclusively upon the sombre side. In my own economical studies and inquiries, I have been so frequently led to the conclusion, that *whatever is the work of Providence is good*, that when logic has seemed to force me to a different conclusion, I have been inclined to distrust my logic. I am aware that this faith in final causes is not unattended with danger to the mind of an inquirer. But this will not prevent me from acknowledging that there is a vast amount of truth in the admirable work of this economist, or from rendering homage to that ardent love of mankind by which every line of it is inspired.

Malthus, whose knowledge of the social economy was profound, had a clear view of all the ingenious mechanism with which nature has provided the human race to assure its onward march on the road of progress. And yet he believed that human progress might find itself entirely paralyzed by one principle, namely, the principle of Population. In contemplating the world, he gave way to the melancholy reflection, that "God appears to have taken great care of the species, and very little of the individual. In fact, as regards a certain class of animated beings, we see them endowed with a

fecundity so prolific, a power of multiplication so extraordinary, a profusion of germs so superabundant, that the destiny of the species would seem undoubtedly well assured, while that of the individuals of the species appears very precarious; for the whole of these germs cannot be brought to life and maturity. They must either fail to live, or must die prematurely."

"Man makes no exception to this law." [It is surprising that this should shock the Socialists, who have never done telling us that general must take precedence of individual right.] "This much is certain, that God has secured the continuance of the human race by providing it with a great power of reproduction. The numbers of mankind, then, would come naturally, but for prudence and foresight, to exceed what the earth could maintain. But man is endued with foresight, and it is his reason and his will which can alone interpose a check to this fatal progression."

Setting out from these premises, which you may dispute if you will, but which Malthus regarded as incontestable, he attached necessarily the highest value to the exercise of foresight. For there was no alternative;—man must either restrain voluntarily this excessive multiplication, or else he must become subject, like all the other species of living creatures, to the operation of positive or repressive checks.

Malthus, then, believed that he could never urge men too strongly to the exercise of foresight. His very philanthropy engaged him to exhibit in strong relief the fatal consequences of imprudent reproduction, in order to put men upon their guard. He said to them: If you multiply inconsiderately, you cannot avoid the chastisement which awaits you in some form or other, and always in a hideous form—famine, war, pestilence, etc. Benevolence, charity, poor-laws, and all other expedients, are but ineffectual remedies.

In his ardour, Malthus allowed an expression to escape him, which, when separated from the rest of his system, and from the sentiment which dictated it, may appear harsh. It occurred in the first edition of his work, which was then only a brochure, and has since become a book of four volumes. It was represented to him that his meaning in this objectionable passage might give rise to erroneous interpretations. He immediately suppressed it, and it has never since reappeared in any of the numerous editions of his Essay on Population.

But Mr Godwin, one of his opponents, had quoted this sup-

founded on facts and figures, he explained a law which has given great offence to our optimists; and in their anxiety to ignore the existence of this law, they have attacked Malthus with rancorous virulence and flagrant bad faith, as if he had himself deliberately thrown in the way of mankind those obstacles which flowed, as he thought, from the principle of population. It would surely have been more philosophical to have proved simply that Malthus was mistaken, and that his pretended law had in reality no existence.

Population, we must allow, is one of a numerous class of subjects, which serve to remind us that man has frequently left him only a choice of evils. Whatever may have been its design, suffering has entered into the plan of Providence. Let us not, then, seek for harmony in the absence of evil, but in the tendency of evil to bring us back to what is good, and in the gradual contraction of its own domain. God has indued us with free will. It is necessary that we should *learn*,—which is a long and difficult process,—and then it is necessary that we should *act* on the knowledge thus acquired, which is not much less difficult. In this way we shall gradually emancipate ourselves from suffering, but without ever altogether escaping from it; for even when we succeed completely in eluding chastisement, we have still to exercise the painful effort of foresight. In freeing ourselves from the one, we must submit ourselves to the other.

It is of no use to rebel against this order of things; for it envelopes us; it is the atmosphere in which we live and breathe; and it is with this alternative of restriction or prevention before us, which we cannot get rid of, and cannot lose sight of, that we proceed, with Malthus, to enter upon the problem of population. On this great question I shall first of all assume the function of a mere reporter, and then give you my own views. If the laws of population can be comprised in a short aphorism, it will be a happy thing for the advancement and diffusion of the science. But if, from the number and the shifting nature of the postulates, we find that these laws refuse to be shut up in a brief and rigorous formula, we must acquiesce. Prolix exactitude is better than delusive brevity.

We have seen that progress consists in causing natural forces to co-operate more and more towards the satisfaction of our wants, so that, at each successive epoch, the same amount of utility is obtained, whilst to society is left either more leisure, or a greater

amount of disposable labour, to be applied to the acquisition of new enjoyments.

On the other hand, we have demonstrated that every fresh conquest we thus gain over nature, after having for a time brought additional profit to the inventor, never fails to become, by the operation of the law of competition, the common and gratuitous patrimony of mankind at large.

From these premises we should conclude that human happiness must be enlarged, and, at the same time, rapidly equalized. That it has not been so in reality, however, is a point beyond all dispute. There are in the world multitudes of unfortunate people, whose wretchedness has not been caused by their own misdeeds.

How are we to account for this?

I believe it is owing to a multiplicity of causes. One of them is called *spoliation*, or, if you will, *injustice*. Economists have referred to it only incidentally, as implying some error, some false scientific notion. Engaged in the explanation of general laws, it is not their business, they think, to concern themselves with those laws, when they are not in operation, or are violated. Spoliation, however, has borne, and still bears, too prominent a share in human affairs to permit even economists to throw it aside as a consideration unworthy of being taken into account. What we have to do with here is not accidental thefts, petty larcenies, or isolated crimes. War, slavery, priestly impostures, privileges, monopolies, restrictions, abuses of taxation,—these are the more salient manifestations of spoliation. It is easy to see what influence disturbing forces of such magnitude must have exercised, and must still exercise by their presence, or the deep traces they have left behind them, on the inequality of conditions; and it will be our business hereafter to estimate the vast extent of their effects.

But another cause which retards progress, and, above all, which hinders its extension to all classes, is, as some authors think, the principle of population.

And no doubt, if in proportion as wealth increases, the number of people among whom that wealth is to be divided increases also, and more rapidly, absolute wealth may be greater, and individual wealth less.

If, moreover, there be one species of services which everybody can render, like the services which require only muscular exertion, and if it be just the class whose business it is to render such services, the worst paid of all, which multiplies with the greatest

rapidity, we must conclude that labour creates for itself a fatal competition. The lowest class will never benefit by progress, if that class increases faster than it can spread and distribute itself.

You see, then, how important the principle of population is.

Malthus has reduced the principle to this formula:

Population has a tendency to keep on a level with the means of subsistence.

I cannot help remarking in passing that it is surprising that the honour and responsibility of enunciating this principle, be it true or false, should have been ascribed to Malthus. No writer on such subjects since the days of Aristotle but has proclaimed it, and frequently in the very same words.*

It is impossible to look around us on the aggregate of animated beings without being convinced beyond doubt that nature has been more engrossed with the care of species than of individuals.

The precautions which nature has taken to ensure the perpetuity of races are remarkable; and among these precautions, a very noticeable one is the profusion of germs or seeds. This super-abundance appears to be calculated in an inverse ratio to the sensibility, intelligence, and power with which each species is endowed, to enable it to resist destruction.

Thus, in the vegetable kingdom, the means of reproduction, by seeds, cuttings, etc., which a single plant can furnish, are countless. One elm (were all its seeds to take root) might give birth in a single year to a million of trees. Why should this not actually happen? Because all the seeds have not the benefit of the conditions which vegetable life exacts, namely, space and nourishment. They are destroyed; and as plants are destitute of sensibility, nature has spared neither the means of reproduction, nor those of destruction.

* Sir James Steuart of Coltness, whose *Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy* was published in 1767, nine years before the appearance of Adam Smith's great work, takes the very same view of the principle of population which Malthus, thirty years afterwards, more formally enunciated. "The generative faculty," says Sir James Steuart, "resembles a spring loaded with a weight, which always exerts itself in proportion to the diminution of resistance. When food has remained some time without augmentation or diminution, generation will carry numbers as high as possible; if, then, food come to be diminished, the spring is overpowered, the force of it becomes less than nothing, inhabitants will diminish, at least in proportion to the overcharge. If, on the other hand, food be increased, the spring will begin to exert itself in proportion as the resistance diminishes, people will begin to be better fed, they will multiply, and, in proportion as they increase in numbers, the food will become scarce again."—TRANSLATOR.

Animals, too, whose life is of a type akin to vegetable life, reproduce themselves in immense numbers. Who has not wondered that oysters, for instance, could multiply sufficiently to supply the enormous consumption of them?

As we advance in the scale of animal life, we find that the means of reproduction has been bestowed by nature with greater parsimony.

Vertebrated animals, especially the larger species, do not multiply so quickly as others. The cow goes nine months, produces only one calf, and must suckle it for some time. Yet even among cattle the reproductive power surpasses what might be thought absolutely necessary. In rich countries, such as England, France, and Switzerland, the number of animals of this description increases notwithstanding the enormous destruction of them; and had we boundless pastures and prairies, there can be no doubt that we might have both a still greater destruction and more rapid reproduction of them. I should say that if nourishment and space were not limited, we might have in a few years ten times more oxen and cows, even if we consumed ten times more meat. The reproductive power of cattle, then, even laying aside the extraneous consideration of the limitation of space and nourishment, is far from being fully developed.

It is certain that the reproductive faculty in the human species is less powerful than in any other, and it ought to be so. Man, in the superior situation in which nature has placed him, as regards intelligence and sympathy, ought not to be exposed to destruction in the same degree as the inferior animals. But we are not to suppose that *physically* he escapes from that law in virtue of which all species have the faculty of multiplying to a greater extent than space and nourishment permit.

I say *physically*, because I am speaking here only of the physiological law.

There is a wide difference between the *physiological power* of multiplying and *actual* multiplication.

The one is an absolute organic power when freed from all obstacle and all limitation *ab extra*—the other is the effective resulting force of this power combined with the aggregate of all the resistance which limits and restrains it. Thus the power of multiplication of the poppy may be a million a year, perhaps; but in a field of poppies the actual reproduction may be stationary or even decrease.

It is this physiological law that Malthus essayed to reduce to a formula. He inquired in what period of time a given number of men would double, *if their space and food were unlimited.*

We can see beforehand that as this hypothesis of the *complete satisfaction of all wants* is never realized in practice, the *theoretic* period must necessarily be shorter than any period of *actual* doubling which has ever been observed.

Observation, in fact, gives very different results for different countries. According to the results obtained by M. Moreau de Jonnès, taking for basis the actual increase of population, the period of doubling would require—in Turkey, 555 years; in Switzerland, 227; in France, 138; in Spain, 106; in Holland, 100; in Germany, 76; in Russia and in England, 43; and in the United States of America, 25 years, deducting the contingent furnished by immigration.

Now, what is the reason of such enormous differences? We have no reason to think that they are the result of physiological causes. Swiss women are as well formed and as prolific as American women.

We must conclude, then, that the absolute generative power is restrained by external obstacles. And what proves this beyond doubt is, that it is manifested as soon as circumstances occur to remove these obstacles. Thus an improved agriculture, new manufactures, some new source of local wealth, leads invariably in that locality to an increase of population. In the same way, when a scourge like the plague, or a famine, or war, destroys a great part of the population, we immediately find that multiplication is more rapidly developed.

When an increase of population, then, is retarded, or stops, we find that space and nourishment are awanting, or likely to be so; that it has encountered an obstacle, or is scared by one.

This phenomenon, the announcement of which has brought down so much abuse on Malthus, appears in truth beyond the reach of doubt.

If you put a thousand mice into a cage, with only as much provision as is necessary for their daily sustenance, their number, in spite of the acknowledged fecundity of the species, can never exceed a thousand, or if it do, there will be privation and there will be suffering,—both tending to reduce the number. In this case it would be correct to say that an external cause limits, not the power of fecundity, but the result of fecundity. There would assuredly

be an antagonism between the physiological tendency and the restraining force, and the result would be that the number would be stationary. To prove this, increase gradually the provision until you double it, and you will very soon find two thousand mice in the cage.

And what is the answer which is made to Malthus? He is met with the very *fact* upon which his theory is founded. The proof, it is said, that the power of reproduction in man is not indefinite, is that in certain countries the population is stationary. If the law of progression were true, if population doubled every twenty-five years, France, which had thirty millions of inhabitants in 1820, would now have more than sixty millions.

Is this logical?

I begin by proving that the population of France has increased only a fifth in twenty-five years, whilst in other countries it has doubled. I seek for the cause of this; and I find it in the deficiency of space and sustenance. I find that in the existing state of cultivation, population, and national manners and habits, there is a difficulty in creating with sufficient rapidity subsistence for generations that might be born, or for maintaining those that are actually born. I assert that the means of subsistence cannot be doubled—at least that they are not doubled—in France every twenty-five years. This is exactly the aggregate of those negative forces which restrain, as I think, the physiological power—and you bring forward this slowness of multiplication in order to prove that this physiological power has no existence. Such a mode of discussing the question is mere trifling.

Is the argument against the geometrical progression of Malthus more conclusive? Malthus has nowhere asserted that, *in point of fact*, population increases according to a geometrical progression. He alleges, on the contrary, that *the fact* is not so, and the subject of his inquiry has reference to the obstacles which hinder it. The progression is brought forward merely as a formula of the *organic* power of multiplication.

Seeking to discover in what time a given population can double itself, *on the assumption that all its wants are supplied*, he fixed this period at twenty-five years. He so fixed it, because direct observation had shown him that this state of things actually existed among a people, who, although very far from fulfilling all the conditions of his hypothesis, came nearer the conditions he had assumed than any other—namely, the people of America. This period once found,

and the question having always reference to the *virtual* power of propagation, he lays it down that population *has a tendency to increase* in a geometrical progression.

This is denied; but the denial is in the teeth of evidence. It may be said, indeed, that the period of doubling may not be everywhere twenty-five years; that it may be thirty, forty, or fifty years; that it varies in different countries and races. All this is fair subject of discussion; but granting this, it certainly cannot be said that, on the hypothesis assumed, the progression is not geometrical. If, in fact, a hundred couples produce two hundred in a given time, why may not two hundred produce four hundred in an equal time?

Because, say the opponents of the theory, multiplication will be restrained.

This is just what Malthus has said.

But by what means will multiplication be restrained?

Malthus points out two general obstacles to indefinite multiplication, which he has denominated the *preventive* and *repressive checks.*

As population can be kept down below the level of its physiological tendency only by a diminution of the number of births, or an increase of the number of deaths, the nomenclature of Malthus is undoubtedly correct.

Moreover, when the conditions, as regards space and nourishment, are such that population cannot go beyond a certain figure, it is evident that the destructive check has more power, in proportion as the preventive check has less. To allege that the number of births may increase without an increase in the number of deaths, while the means of subsistence are stationary, would be to fall into a manifest contradiction.

Nor is it less evident, *à priori*, and independently of other grave economic considerations, that in such a situation voluntary self-restraint is preferable to forced repression.

As far as we have yet gone, then, the theory of Malthus is in all respects incontestable.

He was wrong, perhaps, in adopting this period of twenty-five years as the limit of human fecundity, although it holds good in the United States. I am convinced that in assuming this period he wished to avoid the imputation of exaggeration, or of dealing in pure abstractions. "How can they pretend," he may have thought, "that I give too much latitude to *the possible* if I found my prin-

ciple on what *actually* takes place?" He did not consider that by mixing up in this way the *virtual* and the *real*, and representing as the measure of *the law of multiplication*, without reference to *the law of limitation*, a period which is the result of *facts governed by both laws*, he should expose himself to be misunderstood. This is what has actually happened. His geometrical and arithmetical progressions have been laughed at; he has been reproached for taking the United States as a type of the rest of the world; in a word, the confusion he has given rise to by mixing up these two distinct laws, has been seized upon to confute the one by the other.

When we seek to discover the abstract power of propagation, we must put aside for the moment all consideration of the physical and moral checks arising from deficiency of space, food, or comfortable circumstances. But the question once proposed in these terms, it is quite superfluous to attempt an exact solution. This power, in the human race, as in all organized existences, surpasses, in an enormous proportion, all the phenomena of rapid multiplication that we have observed in the past, or can ever observe in the future. Take wheat, for example: allowing five stalks for every seed, and five grains for every stalk, one grain has the virtual power of producing four hundred millions of grains in five years. Or take the canine race, and suppose four puppies to each litter, and six years of fecundity, we shall find that one couple may in twelve years produce eight millions of cubs.

As regards the human race, assuming sixteen as the age of puberty, and fecundity to cease at thirty, each couple might give birth to eight children. It is making a large deduction to reduce this number to one-half on account of premature deaths, since we are reasoning on the supposition of absolute comfort and all wants satisfied, which greatly limits the amount of mortality. However, let us state the premises in this way, and they give us in twenty-five years 2—4—8—16—32—64—128—256—512, etc.; in short, two millions in two centuries.

If we make the calculation on the basis adopted by Euler, the period of doubling will be twelve years and a half. Eight such periods will make exactly a century, and the increase in that space of time will be as 512 : 2.

At no era, and in no country, have we ever observed the numbers of the human race increase with this frightful rapidity. According to the book of Genesis, the Hebrews who entered

Egypt amounted to seventy couples;* and we find from the book of Numbers that when Moses numbered the people, two centuries afterwards, they amounted to six hundred thousand men above twenty-one years of age,† which supposes a population of two millions at least. From this we may infer that the period of doubling was fourteen years. Statistical tables can scarcely be admitted to control Biblical facts. Shall we say that six hundred thousand men "able to go to war" supposes a population larger than two millions, and infer from that a period of doubling less than Euler has calculated? In that case, we should cast doubt either on the census of Moses or on the calculations of Euler. All that we contend for is, that it should not be pretended that the Hebrews multiplied with greater rapidity than it is possible to multiply.

After this example, which is probably that in which *actual* fecundity approximates most nearly to *virtual* fecundity, we have the case of the United States of America, where we know that the population doubles in less than twenty-five years.

It is unnecessary to pursue such researches farther. It is sufficient to know that in our species, as in all, the organic power of multiplication is superior to the actual multiplication. Moreover, it would involve a contradiction to assert that the actual surpasses the virtual.

Alongside of this absolute power, which it is unnecessary to determine more exactly, and which we may safely regard as uniform, there exists, as we have said, another force, which limits, compresses, suspends, to a certain extent, the action of the first, and opposes to it obstacles of different kinds, varying with times and places, with the occupations, the manners, the laws, or the religion of different nations.

I denominate this second force *the law of limitation;* and it is evident that the progress of population in each country, and in each class, is the result of the combined action of these two laws.

But in what does this law of limitation consist? We may say in a very general way, that the propagation of life is restrained or prevented by the difficulty of sustaining life. This idea, which we

* "Threescore and ten *souls*."—*Gen.* xlvi. 27. "Seventy *souls*."—*Exodus*, i. 5. "Threescore and ten *persons*."—*Deut.* x. 22.—TRANSLATOR.

† 601,730 "from twenty years old and upwards."—*Numbers*, xxvi. 2 and 51.—TRANSLATOR.

have already expressed in the terms of the formula of Malthus, it is of importance to develop farther, for it is the essential part of our subject.*

Organized existences, which are indued with life, but without feeling, are entirely passive in this struggle between the two principles. As regards vegetables, it is strictly true that the number of each species is limited by the means of subsistence. The profusion of germs is infinite, but the resources of space and territorial fertility are not so. These germs injure, or destroy, one another; they fail to grow, or they take root and come to maturity only to the extent that the soil allows of. Animals are indued with feeling, but they would seem in general to be destitute of foresight. They breed, increase, and multiply without regard to the fate of their offspring. Death, premature death, alone limits their multiplication, and maintains the equilibrium between their numbers and their means of subsistence.

M. de Lamennais, in his inimitable language, thus addresses the people:—

"There is room enough in the world for all, and God has made it fertile enough to supply the wants of all." And, further on, he says,—"The Author of the universe has not assigned a worse condition to man than to the inferior animals. Are not all invited to the rich banquet of nature? Is one alone excluded?" And, again, he adds,—"Plants extend their roots from one field to another, in a soil which nourishes them all, and all grow there in peace; none of them absorbs the sap of another."

In all this we see only fallacious declamation, which serves as the basis of dangerous conclusions; and we cannot help regretting that an eloquence so admirable should be devoted to giving popular currency to the most fatal of errors.

It is not true that no plant robs another of its sap, and that all extend their roots in the soil without injury. Hundreds of millions of vegetable germs fall every year upon the ground, derive from it a beginning of vitality, and then die stifled by plants stronger, ranker, hardier than themselves. It is not true that all animals which are born are invited to the banquet of nature, and that none of them is excluded. Wild beasts devour one another; and, of domestic animals, man destroys a countless number. Nothing in fact is better calculated than this to show the existence and relations of these two principles—that of multiplication and that of

* What follows was written in 1846.—Editor.

limitation. Why have we in this country so many oxen and sheep, notwithstanding the havoc we make? Why are there so few bears and wolves, although we slaughter far fewer of them, and they are so organized as to be capable of multiplying much faster? The reason is, that man prepares subsistence for the one class of animals, and takes it away from the other class. As regards each, he so arranges the law of limitation as to leave more or less latitude to the law of increase.

Thus, as regards both vegetables and animals, the limiting force appears only in one form, that of *destruction*. But man is indued with reason and foresight, and this new element modifies, and even changes, the mode of action of this force, so far as he is concerned.

Undoubtedly, in as far as he is a being provided with material organs, or, to speak plainly, in as far as he is an animal, the law of limitation, in the form of destruction, applies to him. It is impossible that the numbers of men can exceed their means of subsistence; for to assert that more men existed than had the means of existing, would imply a contradiction. If, then, his reason and foresight are lulled asleep, he becomes a vegetable, he becomes a brute. In that case, he will inevitably multiply in virtue of the great physiological law which governs all organized nature; and, in that case, it is equally inevitable that he should perish in virtue of that law of limitation the action of which he has ignored.

But if he exercises foresight, this second law comes within the sphere of his will. He modifies and directs it. It is in fact no longer the same law. It is no longer a blind, but an intelligent force; it is no longer a mere natural, it has become a social law. Man is the centre in which these two principles, matter and intelligence, meet, unite, and are blended; he belongs exclusively neither to the one nor to the other. As regards the human race, the *law of limitation* is manifested in both its aspects, and maintains population at the necessary level by the double action of foresight and destruction.

These two actions are not of uniform intensity. On the contrary, the one is enlarged in proportion as the other is restrained. The thing to be accomplished, the point to be reached, is limitation; and it is so more or less by means of *repression*, or by means of *prevention*, according as man is brutish or spiritual, according as he is more allied to matter or to mind, according as he has in him more of vegetative or of moral life. The law may be external to him, or internal, but it must exist somewhere.

We do not form a just idea of the vast domain of foresight, which the translator of Malthus has much circumscribed, by giving currency to that vague and inadequate expression, *moral restraint* [*contrainte morale*], which he has still farther limited by the definition he has given of it, namely, "The virtue which consists in not marrying, when one has not the means of *maintaining* a family, and yet living in chastity." The obstacles which intelligent human society opposes to possible multiplication take many other forms besides that of moral restraint thus defined. What means, for example, the pure and holy ignorance of early life, the only ignorance which it is criminal to dissipate, which every one respects, and over which the timid mother watches as over hidden treasure? What means the modesty which succeeds that ignorance, that mysterious defence of the young female, which intimidates whilst it enchants her lover, and prolongs, while it embellishes, the innocent season of courtship? The veil which is thus interposed at first between ignorance and truth, and then between truth and happiness, is a marvellous thing, and in aught save this would be absurd. What means that power of opinion which imposes such severe laws on the relations of the sexes, stigmatizes the slightest transgression of those laws, and visits it not only on the erring feebleness which succumbs, but, from generation to generation, on the unhappy offspring? What mean that sensitive honour, that rigid reserve, so generally admired even by those who have cast it off, those institutions, those restraints of etiquette, those precautions of all sorts—if they are not the action of that *law of limitation* manifested in an intelligent, moral, and *preventive* shape—in a shape, consequently, which is peculiar to man?

Let these barriers be once overturned—let mankind, in what regards the sexes, be no longer concerned either with etiquette or with fortune, or with the future, or with opinion, or with manners—let men lower themselves to the rank of vegetables or animals,—can we doubt that for the former, as for the latter, the power of multiplication would act with a force to necessitate the instant intervention of the *law of limitation*, manifested under such circumstances in a physical, brutal, and *repressive* shape; that is to say, by the action of indigence, disease, and death?

It is impossible to deny that, but for foresight and moral considerations, marriage would, in most cases, be contracted at an early age, or immediately after puberty. If we fix this age at sixteen, and if the registers of a given country show that marriages, on an average,

do not take place before four-and-twenty, we have then eight years deducted by *the law of limitation*, in its moral and preventive form, from the action of the law of multiplication; and if we add to this figure the necessary allowance for those who never marry, we shall be convinced that the Creator has not degraded man to the level of the beasts that perish, but, on the contrary, has given him the power to transform the *repressive* into the *preventive* limitation.

It is singular enough that the spiritualist school and the materialist school should have, as it were, changed sides on this great question: the former fulminating against foresight, and endeavouring to set up the principle of animal nature; the latter exalting the moral part of man, and enforcing the dominion of reason over passion and appetite.

The truth is, the subject is not rightly understood. Let a father consult the most orthodox clergyman he can find as to the management of his family, the counsels he will receive are just those which science has exalted into *principles*, and which, as such, the clergyman might probably repudiate. "Keep your daughter in strict seclusion," the old minister will say; "conceal from her as much as you can the seductions of the world; cultivate, as you would a precious flower, that holy ignorance, that heavenly modesty, which are at once her charm and her defence. Wait until an eligible match presents itself; and labour in the meantime to secure her an adequate fortune. Consider that a poor and improvident marriage brings along with it much suffering and many dangers. Recall those old proverbs which embody the wisdom of nations, and which assure us that comfortable circumstances constitute the surest guarantee of union and domestic peace. Why be in a hurry? Would you have your daughter at five-and-twenty burdened with a family which she cannot maintain and educate suitably to your rank in life? Would you have her husband, feeling the inadequacy of his income to support his family, fall into affliction and despair, and finally, perhaps, betake himself to riot and debauchery? The subject which now occupies you is the most important which can come under your consideration. Weigh it well and maturely; and avoid precipitation," etc.

Suppose that the father, borrowing the language of M. de Lamennais, should reply: "In the beginning God addressed to all men the command to increase and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it. And yet you would persuade a young woman to live single, renounce family ties, and give up and aban-

don the chaste happiness of married life, and the holy joys of maternity; and all this for no better reason than a sordid fear of poverty." Think you the old clergyman would have no reply to this?

God, he might say, has not commanded man to increase and multiply without discretion and without prudence; to act with as little regard to the future as the inferior animals. He has not indued man with reason, in order that he may cease to use it in the most solemn and important circumstances. He has commanded man, no doubt, to increase, but in order to increase he must live, and in order to live he must have the means of living. In the command to increase, therefore, there is implied another command, namely, to prepare for his offspring the means of subsistence. Religion has not placed celibacy in the catalogue of crimes. So far from that, she has ranked it as a virtue, which she honours and sanctifies. We must not think that we violate the commandment of God when we are preparing to fulfil it with prudence, and with a view to the future good, happiness, and dignity of our family.

Now this reasoning, or reasoning of a similar kind, which we hear repeated every day, and which regulates the conduct of every moral and enlightened family, what is it but the application of a general doctrine to particular cases? Or rather, what is that doctrine, but the generalization of reasoning which applies to every particular case? The spiritualist who repudiates, on principle, the intervention of preventive limitation, is like the natural philosopher who should say to us, "Act in every case as if gravity existed, but don't admit gravitation in theory."

In our observations hitherto we have followed the theory of Malthus; but there is one attribute of humanity to which it seems to me that most of our authors have not assigned that importance which it merits, and which plays an important part in the phenomena relative to population, resolves many of the problems to which this great question has given rise, and gives birth in the mind of the philanthropist to a confidence and serenity which false science had banished; this attribute, which is comprised, indeed, in the notions of reason and foresight, is man's *perfectibility*. Man is perfectible; he is susceptible of amelioration and of deterioration; and if, in a strict sense, he can remain stationary, he can also mount and descend without limit the endless ladder of civilisation. This holds true not only of individuals, but of families, nations, and races.

It is from not having taken into account all the power of this progressive principle, that Malthus has landed us in those discouraging consequences which have rendered his theory generally repulsive.

For, regarding the *preventive check*, in a somewhat ascetic and not very attractive light, he could hardly attribute much force to it. Hence he concludes that it is the *repressive* check which generally operates; in other words, vice, poverty, war, crime, etc.

This, as I think, is an error; and we are about to see that the *limitative* force presents itself not only in the shape of an effort of chastity, an act of self-control, but also, and above all, as a condition of happiness, an instructive movement which prevents men from degrading themselves and their families.

Population, it has been said, tends to keep on a level with the means of subsistence. I should say that, for this expression *means of subsistence*, formerly in universal use, J. B. Say has substituted another which is much more correct, namely, *means of existence*. At first sight it would seem that subsistence alone enters into the question, but it is not so. *Man does not live by bread alone*, and a reference to facts shows us clearly that population is arrested, or retarded, when the aggregate of all the means of existence, including clothing, lodging, and other things which climate or even habit renders necessary, come to be awanting.

We should say, then, that population tends to keep on a level with the *means of existence*.

But do these means constitute something which is fixed, absolute, and uniform? Certainly not. In proportion as civilisation advances, the range of man's wants is enlarged, having regard even to simple *subsistence*. Regarded as a perfectible being, the *means of existence*, among which we comprehend the satisfaction of moral and intellectual, as well as physical wants, admit of as many degrees as there are degrees in civilisation itself, in other words, of infinite degrees. Undoubtedly, there is an inferior limit—to appease hunger, to shelter oneself from cold to some extent, is one condition of life, and this limit we may perceive among American savages or European paupers. But a superior limit I know not—in fact there is none. Natural wants satisfied, others spring up, which are factitious at first, if you will, but which habit renders natural in their turn, and, after these, others still, and so on without assignable limit.

At each step, then, which man takes on the road of civilisation,

in the case of a nation or a class, the means of existence have descended to that inferior limit at which they come to be confounded with the means of pure subsistence, as in China, in Ireland, and among the lowest and poorest class of every country, the smallest oscillations of population, or of the supply of food, are tantamount to death. In this respect, facts confirm the scientific induction. Famine has not for a long period visited Europe, and we attribute the absence of this scourge to a multitude of causes. The most general of these causes undoubtedly is, that the *means* of *existence*, by reason of social progress, have risen far above the *means of mere subsistence.* When years of scarcity come, we are thus enabled to give up many enjoyments before encroaching on the first necessaries of life. Not so in such countries as China or Ireland, where men have nothing in the world but a little rice or a few potatoes. When the rice or potato crops fail, they have absolutely no means of purchasing other food.

A third consequence of human perfectibility we must notice here, because it tends to modify the doctrine of Malthus in its most afflicting phase. The formula which we have attributed to that economist is, that "Population tends to keep on a level with the means of subsistence." We should say that he has gone much farther, and that his true formula, that from which he has drawn his most distressing conclusions, is this: "Population tends *to go beyond* the means of subsistence." Had Malthus by this simply meant to say that in the human race the power of propagating life is superior to the power of sustaining life, there could have been no controversy. But this is not what he means. He affirms that, taking into account absolute fecundity on the one hand, and, on the other, limitation, as manifested in the two forms, repressive and preventive, the result is still the tendency of population to go beyond the means of subsistence.* This holds true of every species of living creatures, except the human race. Man is an intelligent being, and can make an unlimited use of the preventive check. He is perfectible, seeks after improvement, and shuns deterioration. Progress is his normal state, and progress presupposes a more and more enlightened exercise of the preventive check; and then *the*

* "There are few states in which there is not a constant effort in the population to increase beyond the means of subsistence. This constant effort as *constantly tends* to subject the lower classes of society to distress, *and to prevent any great permanent melioration of their condition.* . . . The constant effort towards population . . . increases the number of people *before* the means of subsistence are increased," etc. —MALTHUS *on Population*, vol. i. pp. 17, 18, 6th edition.

means of existence increase more rapidly than population. This effect not only flows from the principle of perfectibility, but is confirmed by *fact*, since on all sides the range of satisfactions is extended. Were it true, as Malthus asserts, that along with every addition to the means of subsistence there is a still greater addition to the population, the misery of our race would be fatally—inevitably—progressive; society would begin with civilisation and end with barbarism. The contrary is the fact; and we must conclude that the law of limitation has had sufficient force to restrain the multiplication of men, and keep it below the multiplication of products.

It may be seen from what has been said how vast and how difficult the question of population is. We may regret, no doubt, that a precise formula has not been given to it, and we regret still more that we find ourselves unable to propose one. But we may see how repugnant the narrow limits of a dogmatic axiom are to such a subject. It is a vain endeavour to try to express, in the form of an inflexible equation, the relations of data so essentially variable. Allow me to recapitulate these data.

(1.) *The law of increase or multiplication.*—The absolute, virtual, physiological power which resides in the human race to propagate life, apart from the consideration of the difficulty of sustaining life. This first datum, the only one susceptible of anything like precision, is the only one in which precision is superfluous; for what matters it where the superior limit of multiplication is placed in the hypothesis, if it can never be attained in the actual condition of man, which is to sustain life with the sweat of his brow?

(2.) There is a *limit*, then, to the law of multiplication. What is that limit? The means of existence, it is replied. But what are the means of existence? The aggregate of satisfactions or enjoyments, which cannot be exactly defined. They vary with times, places, races, ranks, manners, opinions, habits, and consequently the limit we are in search of is shifted or displaced.

(3.) Last of all, it may be asked, in what consists the force which restrains population within this limit, which is itself movable? As far as man is concerned, it is twofold: a force which *represses*, and a force which *prevents*. Now, the action of the first, incapable as it is in itself of being accurately measured, is, moreover, entirely subordinated to the action of the second, which depends on the degree of civilisation, on the power and prevalence of habits, on the tendency of political and religious institutions, on the organi-

zation of property, of labour, of family relations, etc. Between the law of multiplication and the law of limitation, then, it is impossible to establish an equation from which could be deduced the actual population. In algebra *a* and *b* represent determinate quantities which are numbered and measured, and of which we can fix the proportions; but *means of existence, moral government of the will, inevitable action of mortality,* these are the three data of the problem of population, data which are flexible in themselves, and which partake somewhat, moreover, of the astonishing flexibility of the subject to which they have reference—man—that being whom Montaigne describes as so fluctuating and so variable. It is not surprising, then, that in desiring to give to this equation a precision of which it is incapable, economists have rather divided men's minds than brought them into unison, and this because there is not one of the terms of their formulas which is not open to a multitude of objections, both in reasoning and in fact.

We shall now proceed to say something on the practical application of the doctrine of population, for application not only elucidates doctrine, but is the true fruit of the tree of science.

Labour, as we have said, is the only subject of exchange. In order to obtain utility (unless the utility which nature gives us gratuitously), we must be at the pains to produce it, or remunerate another who takes the pains for us. Man creates, and can create, nothing; he arranges, disposes, or transports things for a useful purpose; he cannot do this without exertion, and the result of this exertion becomes his property. If he gives away his property, he has right to recompense, in the shape of a service which is judged equivalent after free discussion. Such is the principle of value, of remuneration, of exchange—a principle which is not the less true because it is simple. Into what we denominate *products,* there enter divers degrees of *natural utility,* and divers degrees of *artificial utility;* the latter, which alone implies labour, is alone the subject of human bargains and transactions; and without questioning in the least the celebrated and suggestive formula of J. B. Say, that "products are exchanged for products," I esteem it more rigorously scientific to say, that *labour is exchanged for labour,* or, better still, that *services are exchanged for services.*

It must not be inferred from this, however, that quantities of labour are exchanged for each other in the ratio of their duration or of their intensity; or that the man who transfers to another an

hour's labour, or even the man who labours with the greatest intensity, who, as it were, pushes the needle of the dynamometer up to 100 degrees, can always stipulate for an equal effort in return. *Duration* and *intensity* are, no doubt, two of the elements taken into account in the appreciation of labour; but they are not the only ones; for we must consider, besides, that labour may be more or less repugnant, dangerous, difficult, intelligent, that it may imply more or less foresight, and may even be more or less successful. When transactions are free, and property completely secured, each has entire control over his own labour, and, consequently, need only dispose of it at his own price. The limit to his compliance is the point at which it is more advantageous to reserve his labour than to exchange it; the limit to his exactions is the point at which the other party to the bargain finds it his interest not to make the exchange.

There are in society as many *strata*, if I may use the expression, as there are degrees in the scale of remuneration. The worst remunerated of all labour is that which approximates most nearly to brute force. This is an arrangement of Providence which is just, useful, and inevitable. The mere manual labourer soon reaches that *limit to his exactions* of which I have just spoken, for everybody can perform this kind of muscular automatic labour; and the *limit to his compliance* is also soon reached, for he is incapable of the intelligent labour which his own wants require. *Duration* and *intensity*, which are attributes of matter, are the sole elements of the remuneration of this species of unskilled material labour; and that is the reason why it is usually paid *by the day*. All industrial progress consists in this, namely, in replacing in each product a certain amount of *artificial*, and, consequently, *onerous utility*, by the same amount of *natural*, and, therefore, *gratuitous utility*. Hence it follows, that if there be one class of society more interested than another in free competition, it is the labouring class. What would be the fate of these men if natural agents, and new processes and instruments of production, were not brought continually, by means of competition, to confer *gratuitously*, on all, the results of their co-operation? The mere day-labourer knows not how to make available in the production of the commodities he has occasion for, heat, gravitation, or elasticity; nor can he discover the processes, nor does he possess the instruments, by which these forces are rendered useful. When such discoveries are new, the labour of inventors, who are men of

the highest intelligence, is well remunerated; in other words, that labour is the equivalent of a large amount of rude unskilled labour; or, again, to change the expression, his product is *dear*. But competition interposes, the product falls in price, the co-operation of natural agents is no longer profitable to the producer, but to the consumer, and the labour which has made them available approximates, as regards remuneration, to that labour which is estimated by mere duration. Thus, the common fund of gratuitous wealth goes on constantly increasing. Products of every kind tend, day after day, to become again invested,—and they are in reality invested,—with that condition of *gratuitousness* which characterizes our supply of air, and light, and water. The general level of humanity thus continues to rise, and to equalize itself; and, apart from the operation of the law of population, the lowest class of society is that whose amelioration is virtually the most rapid. We have said, apart from the operation of the law of population; and this brings us back to the subject we are now examining.

Figure to yourself a basin into which an orifice which is constantly enlarging admits a constantly increasing supply of water. If we look only to this circumstance we conclude that the level of the water in the basin is continually rising. But if the sides of the basin are flexible, and capable of contracting and expanding, it is evident that the height of the water will depend on the manner in which this new circumstance is combined with the other. The level of the water will sink, however great may be the supply running into the basin, if the capacity of the basin itself is enlarged still more rapidly. It will rise, if the circle of the reservoir is enlarged only proportionally and very slowly, higher still if it remain fixed, and highest of all if it is narrowed or contracted.

This is a picture of the social class whose destinies we are now considering, and which constitutes, it must be allowed, the great mass of mankind. The water which comes into the basin through the elastic orifice represents their remuneration, or the objects fitted to supply their wants and to sustain life. The flexibility of the sides of the basin represents the movement of population. It is certain* that the means of existence overtake our population in a constantly increasing progression, but then it is equally certain that their numbers may increase in a still superior progression. The life of this class, then, will be more or less happy, more or less comfortable, according as the law of limitation, in its moral, intel-

* See chap. xi. *ante*, pp. 4, 5, *et seq.*

ligent, and preventive form, shall circumscribe, to a greater or less extent, the absolute law of multiplication. There is a limit to the increase of the numbers of the working class. That limit is the point at which the progressive fund of remuneration becomes insufficient for their maintenance. But there is no limit to their possible amelioration, because of the two elements which constitute it, the one, wealth, is constantly increasing, and the other, population, is under their own control.

What we have just said with reference to the lowest social grade, the class of mere manual labourers, is applicable also to each of the superior grades, when classified in relation to one another, in an inverse proportion, so to speak, to the rudeness and materiality of their occupations. Taking each class simply by itself, all are subjected to the same general laws. In all there is a struggle between the physiological power of multiplication, and the moral power of limitation. The only respect in which one class differs from another is with reference to the point where these two forces meet, the height to which the limit between the two laws may be raised by remuneration or be fixed by the habits of the labourers—this limit we have denominated the *means of existence.*

But if we consider the various classes, no longer each by itself, but in their reciprocal relations, I think we can discern the influence of two principles acting in an inverse sense, and this without doubt is the explanation of the actual condition of mankind. We have shown how all the economic phenomena, and especially the law of competition, tend to an equality of conditions. Theoretically this appears to us incontestable. Seeing that no natural advantage, no ingenious process, none of the instruments by which such processes are made available, can remain permanently with producers, as such; and seeing that the results of such natural advantages or discoveries, by an irresistible law of Providence, tend to become the common, gratuitous, and, consequently, equal, patrimony of all men, it is evident that the poorest class is the one which derives the greatest *relative* profit from this admirable arrangement of the laws of the social economy. Just as the poor man is as liberally treated as the rich man with reference to the air he breathes, in the same way he becomes equal to the rich man, as regards all that portion of the value of commodities which progress is constantly annihilating. Essentially, then, the human race has a very marked tendency towards *equality.* I do not speak of a tendency of aspiration, but a tendency of realization. And yet equality is not

realized, or is realized so slowly, that in comparing two distant epochs we are scarcely sensible of the progress. Indeed we are so little sensible of it, that many able men deny it altogether, although in this they are certainly mistaken. Now, what is the cause which retards this fusion of classes on a common and progressive level?

In searching for the cause we need not, I think, look farther than the various degrees of *foresight* which each class exercises as regards the increase of population. The law of limitation, as has been already said, in as far as it is *moral* and *preventive*, we have under our own control. Man, as we have also said, is perfectible, and in proportion to his progress in improvement, he pays a more intelligent regard to this law. The superior classes, then, in proportion as they are more enlightened, are led to make greater exertions, and submit to greater sacrifices, in order to maintain their respective numbers on a level with the means of existence which their position in society demands.

Were we sufficiently far advanced in statistics, we should probably have this theoretical deduction converted into certainty, and have it proved by fact that marriages are less hasty and precocious among the higher than among the lower classes of society. If it be so, it is easy to see that in the general market, to which all classes bring their respective services, and in which labour of every kind is the subject of exchange, unskilled labour will be supplied in greater abundance than skilled labour; and this explains the continuance of that inequality of conditions, which so many, and such powerful, causes of another kind tend constantly to efface.

The theory which we have now briefly explained leads us to the practical conclusion that the best forms of philanthropy, the best social institutions, are those which, while acting in accordance with the Providential plan, as revealed to us by the social harmonies—I mean the plan of progressive equality—shall cause to descend among all ranks of society, and especially the lowest ranks, knowledge, discretion, morality, and foresight.

I say institutions, because, in fact, foresight results as much from the necessities of position as from resolutions purely intellectual. There are certain organizations of property, or, I should rather say, of industry, which are more favourable than others to what economists call a knowledge of the market, and, consequently, to *foresight*. It seems certain, for example, that *métayage* is much

more efficacious than *fermage** (the latter necessitating the employment of day-labourers) in interposing a preventive obstacle to the exuberance of population among the lower classes. A family of *métayers* is in a much more likely situation than a family of day-labourers to experience the inconveniences of hasty marriages and improvident multiplication.

I have also used the expression, "forms of philanthropy." In fact, almsgiving may effect a local and present good, but its influence must be limited even where it is not prejudicial to the happiness of the labouring classes; for it does not develop, but, on the contrary, may paralyze, that virtue which is most fitted to elevate the condition of the labourer, namely, *foresight*. To disseminate sound ideas, and, above all, to induce those habits which mark a certain degree of self-respect, is the greatest and most permanent good which we can confer upon the lower orders.

The *means of existence*, we cannot too often repeat, do not constitute a fixed quantity; they depend upon the state of manners, of opinion, and of habits. Whatever rank a man holds in the social scale, he has as much repugnance to descend from the position to which he has been accustomed as can be felt by men of an inferior grade. Perhaps there is even greater suffering in the mind of the aristocrat, the noble scions of whose house are lost among the *bourgeoisie*, than in that of the citizen whose sons become manual labourers, or in that of manual labourers whose children are reduced to pauperism. The *habit*, then, of enjoying a certain amount of material prosperity and a certain rank in life, is the strongest stimulant to the exercise of foresight; and if the working classes shall once raise themselves to the possession of a higher amount of enjoyment, and be unwilling again to descend in the social scale, then, in order to maintain themselves in that position, and preserve wages in keeping with their new habits, they must employ the infallible means of preventive limitation.

It is for this reason that I regard as one of the finest manifes-

* "Although we might describe *fermage*, in a general way, as the letting or leasing of land, in whatever form it is done, we must distinguish two forms of letting, equally common in various parts of Europe, and very different in their effects. In the one form, the land is let for a fixed rent, payable in money annually. In the other, it is let under the condition of the produce being divided between the proprietor and the cultivator. It is to the first of these two modes of leasing land that we give more particularly the name of *fermage*. The other is generally designated in France as *métayage*."—*Dictionnaire de l'Économie Politique*, tome i. p. 759.

tations of philanthropy the resolution which appears to have been taken in England by many of the proprietors and manufacturers, to pull down cottages of mud and thatch, and substitute for them brick houses, neat, spacious, well lighted, well aired, and conveniently furnished. Were such a measure to become general, it would elevate the tone of the working classes. It would convert into real wants what are nowadays regarded as comparative luxuries; it would raise that limit which we have denominated the *means of existence*, and, by consequence, the *standard of remuneration*, from its present low rate. And why not? The lower orders in civilized countries are much above the lower orders among savages. They have raised themselves so far; and why should they not raise themselves still more?

We must not, however, deceive ourselves on this subject; progress can be but very slow, since to some extent it must be *general*. In certain parts of the world it might perhaps be realized rapidly if the people exercised no influence over each other; but this is not so. There is a great law of solidarity for the human race, in progress as well as in deterioration. If in England, for example, the condition of the working classes were sensibly improved, in consequence of a general rise of wages, French industry would have more chances of surpassing its rival, and by its advance would moderate the progressive movement manifested on the other side of the Channel. It would seem that, beyond certain limits, Providence has not designed that one people should rise above another. And thus, in the great aggregate of human society, as in its most minute details, we always find that admirable and inflexible forces tend to confer, in the long-run, on the masses, individual or collective advantages, and to bring back all temporary manifestations of superiority to a common level, which, like that of the ocean when the tide flows, is always equalizing itself and always advancing.

To conclude, perfectibility, which is the distinctive characteristic of man, being given, and the action of competition and the law of limitation being known, the fate of the human race, as regards its worldly destinies, may be thus summed up:—1*st*, Simultaneous elevation of all the social ranks, or of the general level of humanity; 2*d*, Indefinite approximation of conditions, and successive annihilation of the distances which separate classes, as far as consistent with absolute justice; 3*d*, Relative diminution of the numbers of the lowest and highest orders, and extension of

intermediate classes. It may be said that these laws must lead to absolute equality. No more than the constant approximation of asymptotical lines can finally lead to their junction. . . . . .

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This chapter, the greater part of which was written in 1846, does not perhaps express with sufficient clearness the author's opposition to the ideas of Malthus.

Bastiat explains here very clearly the unperceived and naturally preventive action of individual motive,—the progressive desire for happiness, the ambition of men to better their condition; and the habit which causes each to regard the competence he has gained as a necessity,—*an inferior limit of the means of existence*, below which no one would willingly see his family reduced. But this is in some measure the negative view of the law. It only shows that in every society founded upon the institutions of property and family, population ceases to be a *danger*.

It remains to be shown that *population is in itself a force*, and to prove the necessary increase of productive power which results from the density of population. This, as the author has himself said (Part I., p. 87), is the important element neglected by Malthus, and which discloses harmony, where Malthus discovered discordance.

From the premises indicated in the chapter *on Exchange*, premises which he proposed to himself to develop in treating of population, the conclusion which Bastiat wished to draw was decidedly anti-Malthusian. We find it stated in one of the last notes which he wrote, and he recommends its being insisted on:—

"In the chapter on Exchange it has been demonstrated that, in a state of isolation, man's wants surpass his faculties, and that, in the social state, his faculties surpass his wants.

"This excess of faculties over wants proceeds from exchange, which is—association of efforts—separation of occupations.

"Thence an action and a reaction of causes and effects, in a circle of progress which is infinite.

"The superiority of faculties over wants, creating for each generation an excess of wealth, permits it to rear a more numerous offspring. A generation more numerous implies a better and more marked separation of occupations, and a new degree of superiority given to faculties over wants.

"This exhibits an admirable harmony.

"Thus, at a given epoch, the general aggregate of wants being represented by 100, and that of faculties by 110, the excess of 10 is thus divided,—5, for example, goes to the amelioration of men's condition, to the provoking of wants of a more elevated character, to the development of self-respect, etc.,—and 5 to the augmentation of their numbers.

"The wants of the second generation are 110,—namely, 5 more in quantity, and 5 more in quality.

"But for that very reason (for the double reason of the more complete physical, intellectual, and moral development, and of the greater density of population, which renders production more easy), the faculties have also increased in power. They will be represented, for example, by the figures 120 or 130.

"New excess, new division, etc.

"And let us not fear the *trop plein*. The elevation of wants, which is nothing else than the sentiment of dignity, is a natural limit. . . . ."

EDITOR.

XVII.

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SERVICES.

Services are exchanged for *services.*

The *equivalence* of *services* results from voluntary exchange, and the free bargaining and discussion which precede it.

In other words, each *service* rendered to society is *worth* as much as any other service of which it constitutes the equivalent, provided *supply* and *demand* are in all respects perfectly *free.*

It is in vain to carp and refine upon it; it is impossible to conceive the idea of value without associating with it the idea of liberty.

When the equivalence of services is not impaired by violence, restriction, or fraud, we may pronounce that *justice* prevails.

I do not mean to say that the human race will then have reached the extreme limit of improvement, for liberty does not exclude the errors of individual appreciations—man is frequently the dupe of his judgments and passions; nor are his desires always arranged in the most rational order. We have seen that the value of a service may be appreciated without there being any reasonable proportion between its value and its utility; and this arises from our giving certain desires precedence over others. It is the progress of intelligence, of good sense, and of manners, which establishes this fair and just proportion by putting each service, if I may so express myself, in its right moral place. A frivolous object, a puerile show, an immoral pleasure, may have much value in one country, and may be despised or repudiated in another. The equivalence of services, then, is a different thing from a just appreciation of their utility. But still, as regards this, it is liberty and the sense of responsibility which correct and improve our tastes, our desires, our satisfactions, and our appreciations.

In all countries of the world, there exists one class of services, which, as regards the manner in which they are distributed and

remunerated, accomplishes an evolution quite different from that of private or free services. I allude to *public services.*

When a want assumes a character so universal and so uniform that one can describe it as a *public want*, it may be convenient for those people who form part of the same agglomeration (be it district, province, or country) to provide for the satisfaction of that want by collective action, or a collective delegation of power. In that case, they name functionaries whose duty it is to render to the community, and distribute among them, the service in question, and whose remuneration they provide for by a contribution which is, at least in principle, proportionate to the means of each member of the society.

In reality, the primordial elements of the social economy are not necessarily impaired or set aside by this peculiar form of exchange, —above all, when the consent of all parties is assumed. It still resolves itself into a transmission of efforts, a transmission of services. These functionaries labour to satisfy the wants of the taxpayers, and the taxpayers labour to satisfy the wants of the functionaries. The relative value of their reciprocal services is determined by a method which we shall have afterwards to examine; but the essential principles of the exchange, speaking in the abstract at least, remain intact.

Those authors, then, are wrong, who, influenced by their dislike of unjust and oppressive taxes, regard as *lost* all values devoted to the public service.* This unqualified condemnation will not bear examination. In so far as *loss* or *gain* is concerned, the public service, scientifically considered, differs in nothing from *private service.* Whether I protect my field myself, or pay a man for protecting it, or pay the State for causing it to be protected, there is always a sacrifice with a corresponding benefit. In both ways, no doubt, I lose this amount of labour, but I gain security. It is not a loss, but an exchange.

Will it be said that I give a material object, and receive in return a thing without body or form? This is just to fall back

* "The moment this value is handed over by the taxpayer, it is lost to him; the moment it is consumed by the Government, it is lost to everybody, and does not return to society."—J. B. Say, *Traité d'Économie Politique*, liv. iii. chap. 9.

Unquestionably; but society gains in return the service which is rendered to it—security, for example. Moreover, Say returns to the correct doctrine almost immediately afterwards, when he says,—"To levy a tax is to do a wrong to society—a wrong which is compensated by no advantage, *when no service is rendered to society in exchange.*"—*Ibid.*

upon the erroneous theory of value. As long as we attribute value to matter, not to services, we must regard every public service as being without value, or lost. Afterwards, when we begin to shift about between what is true and what is false, on the subject of value, we shift about between what is true and what is false on the subject of taxation.

If taxation is not necessarily a loss, still less is it necessarily spoliation.* No doubt, in modern societies, spoliation by means of taxation is perpetrated on a great scale. We shall afterwards see that it is one of the most active of those causes which disturb the equivalence of services and the harmony of interests. But the best way of combating and eradicating the abuses of taxation, is to steer clear of that exaggeration which would represent all taxation as being *essentially*, and *in itself*, spoliation.

Thus, considered in themselves, in their own nature, in their normal state, and apart from abuses, *public services*, like *private services*, resolve themselves into pure exchanges.

But the modes in which, in these two forms of exchange, services are compared, bargained for, and transmitted, the modes in which they are brought to an equilibrium or equivalence, and in which their relative value is manifested, are so different in themselves, and in their effects, that the reader will bear with me if I dwell at some length on this difficult subject, one of the most interesting which can be presented to the consideration of the economist and the statesman. It is here, in truth, that we have the connecting link between politics and social economy. It is here that we discover the origin and tendency of the most fatal error which has ever infected the science, the error of confounding society with Government; society being the grand *whole*, which includes both private and public services, and Government, the fraction which includes public services alone.

Unfortunately, when, by following the teaching of Rousseau, and his apt scholars the French republicans, we employ indifferently the words Government and Society, we pronounce implicitly, be-

* "Public contributions, even when they are consented to by the nation, are a violation of property, seeing they can be levied only on values which have been produced by the land, capital, and industry of individuals. Thus, *whenever they exceed the amount indispensable for the preservation of society*, we must regard them as spoliation."—J. B. Say, *Traité d'Économie Politique*, liv. iii. chap. 9.

Here, again, the subsequent qualification corrects the too absolute judgment previously pronounced. The doctrine that *services are exchanged for services*, simplifies much both the problem and its solution.

forehand, and without examination, that the State can and ought to absorb private exertion altogether, along with individual liberty and responsibility. We conclude that all private services ought to be converted into public services. We conclude that the social order is a conventional and contingent fact which owes its existence to the law. We pronounce the law-giver omnipotent, and mankind powerless, as having forfeited their rights.

In fact, we see public services, or governmental action, extended or restrained according to circumstances of time and place, from the Communism of Sparta, or the Missions of Paraguay, to the individualism of the United States, and the centralization of France.

The question which presents itself on the threshold of Politics, as a science, then, is this :—

What are the services which should remain in the domain of private activity? And what are the services which should fall within that of public or collective activity?

The problem, then, is this :—

In the great circle called *society*, to trace accurately the inscribed circle called *government*.

It is evident that this problem belongs to Political Economy, since it implies the comparative examination of two very different forms of exchange.

This problem once solved, there remains another, namely, what is the best organization of public services? This last belongs to pure Politics, and we shall not enter upon it.

Let us examine, then, first of all, the essential differences by which public and private services are characterized, which is a preliminary inquiry necessary to enable us to fix accurately the line which should divide them.

The whole of the preceding portion of this work has been devoted to exhibit the evolution of *private services*. We have had a glimpse of it in this formal or tacit proposition: *Do this for me, and I shall do that for you;* which implies, whether as regards what we give away or what we receive, a double and reciprocal consent. We can form no correct notion, then, of barter, exchange, appreciation, value, apart from the consideration of *liberty*, nor of liberty apart from *responsibility*. In having recourse to exchange, each party consults, on his own responsibility, his wants, his tastes, his desires, his faculties, his affections, his convenience, his entire situation; and we have nowhere denied that to the exercise of free

will is attached the possibility of error, the possibility of a foolish and irrational choice. The error belongs not to exchange, but to human imperfection; and the remedy can only reside in responsibility itself (that is to say, in liberty), seeing that liberty is the source of all experience. To establish restraint in the business of exchange, to destroy free will under the pretext that man may err, would be no improvement, unless it were first proved to us that the agent who organizes the restraint does not himself participate in the imperfection of our nature, and is subject neither to the passions nor to the errors of other men. On the contrary, is it not evident that this would be, not only to displace responsibility, but to annihilate it, at least as regards all that is valuable in its remunerative, retributive, experimental, corrective, and, consequently, progressive character? Again, we have seen that free exchanges, or services voluntarily rendered and received, are, under the action of competition, continually extending the co-operation of gratuitous forces, as compared with that of onerous forces, the domain of community as compared with the domain of property, and thus we have come to recognise in liberty that power which promotes progressive equality, or social harmony.

We have no need to describe the form which exchanges assume when thus left free. Restraint takes a thousand shapes; liberty has but one. I repeat once more, that the free and voluntary transmission of private services is defined by the simple words: "Give me this, and I will give you that; do this for me, and I shall do that for you"—*Do ut des; facio ut facias.**

The same thing does not hold with reference to the exchange of *public services*. Here *constraint* is to a certain extent inevitable, and we encounter an infinite number of different forms, from absolute despotism, down to the universal and direct intervention of all the citizens.

Although this ideal order of things has never been anywhere actually realized, and perhaps may never be so, except in a very elusory shape, we may nevertheless assume its existence. What is the object of our inquiry? We are seeking to discover the modifications which *services* undergo when they enter the public domain; and for the purposes of science we must discard the consideration of individual and local acts of violence, and regard the public service simply as such, and as existing under the most legitimate circumstances. In a word, we must investigate the trans-

* Civil law terms. See Part I., p. 146.

formation which it undergoes from the single circumstance of its having become public, apart from the causes which have made it so, and of the abuses which may mingle with the means of execution.

The process is this :—

The citizens name mandatories. These mandatories meet, and decide, by a majority, that a certain class of wants—the want of education, for example—can no longer be supplied by free exertions and free exchanges made by the citizens themselves, and they decree that education shall be provided by functionaries specially delegated and intrusted with the work of instruction. So much for the service *rendered*. As regards the services *received*, as the State has secured the time and abilities of these new functionaries for the benefit of the citizens, it must also take from the citizens a part of their means for the benefit of the functionaries. This is effected by an assessment or general contribution.

In all civilized communities such contributions are paid in money. It is scarcely necessary to say that behind this money there is labour. In reality, it is a payment in kind. In reality, the citizens work for the functionaries, and the functionaries work for the citizens, just as, in free and private transactions, the citizens work for one another.

We set down this observation here, in order to elude a very widely spread sophism which springs from the consideration of money. We hear it frequently said that money received by public functionaries falls back like refreshing rain on the citizens. And we are led to infer that this rain is a second benefit added to that which results from the service. Reasoning in this way, people have come to justify the existence of functions the most parasitical. They do not consider that if this service had remained in the domain of private activity, the money (which, in place of going to the treasury, and from the treasury to the functionaries) would have gone directly to men who voluntarily undertook the duty, and in the same way would have fallen back like rain upon the masses. This sophism will not stand examination, when we extend our regards beyond the mere circulation of money, and see that at the bottom it is labour exchanged for labour, services for services. In public life, it may happen that functionaries receive services without rendering any in return ; and then there is a loss entailed on the taxpayer, however we may delude ourselves with reference to this circulation of specie.

Be this as it may, let us resume our analysis:—

We have here, then, an exchange under a new form. Exchange includes two terms—*to give*, and *to receive*. Let us inquire then how this transaction, which from being private has become public, is affected in the double point of view of services *rendered* and services *received*.

In the first place, it is proved beyond doubt that public services always, or nearly always, extinguish, in law or in fact, private services of the same nature. The State, when it undertakes a service, generally takes care to decree that no other body shall render it, more especially if one of its objects be to derive a revenue from it. Witness the cases of postage, tobacco, gunpowder, etc. Did the State not take this precaution, the result would be the same. What manufacturer would engage to render to the public a service which the State renders for nothing? We scarcely meet with any one who seeks a livelihood by teaching law or medicine privately, by the formation of high-roads, by rearing thorough-bred horses, by founding schools of arts and design, by clearing lands in Algeria, by establishing museums, etc. And the reason is this, that the public will not go to purchase what the State gives it for nothing. As M. de Cormenin has said, the trade of the shoemakers would soon be put an end to, even were it declared inviolable by the first article of the constitution, if Government took it into its head to furnish shoes to everybody gratuitously.

In truth, in the word *gratuitous*, as applied to public services, there lurks the grossest and most puerile of sophisms.

For my own part, I wonder at the extreme gullibility of the public in allowing itself to be taken in with this word. What! it is said, do you not wish gratuitous education? gratuitous studs?

Certainly I wish them, and I should also wish to have gratuitous food and gratuitous lodging—if it were possible.

But there is nothing really gratuitous but what costs nothing to any one. Now public services cost something to everybody; and it is just because everybody has paid for them beforehand that they no longer cost anything to the man who receives the benefit. The man who has paid his share of the general contribution will take good care not to pay for the service a second time by calling in the aid of private industry.

Public service is thus substituted for private service. It adds nothing either to the general labour of the nation or to its wealth. It accomplishes by means of functionaries, what would have been

effected by private industry. The question, then, is, Which of these arrangements entails the greatest amount of inconvenience? and the solution of that question is the object of the present chapter.

The moment the satisfaction of a want becomes the subject of a public service, it is withdrawn, to a great extent, from the domain of individual liberty and responsibility. The individual is no longer free to procure that satisfaction in his own way, to purchase what he chooses and when he chooses, consulting only his own situation and resources, his means, and his moral appreciations; nor can he any longer exercise his discretion in regard to the order in which he may judge it reasonable to provide for his various wants. Whether he will or not, his wants are now supplied by the public, and he obtains from society, not that measure of service which he judges useful, as he did in the case of private services, but the amount of service which the Government thinks it proper to furnish, whatever be its quantity and quality. Perhaps he is in want of bread to satisfy his hunger, and part of the bread of which he has such urgent need is withheld from him, in order to furnish him with education, or with theatrical entertainments, which he does not want. He ceases to exercise free control over the satisfaction of his own wants, and having no longer any feeling of responsibility, he no longer exerts his intelligence. Foresight has become as useless to him as experience. He is less his own master; he is deprived, to some extent, of free will, he is less progressive, he is less a man. Not only does he no longer judge for himself in a particular case; he has got out of the habit of judging for himself in any case. The moral torpor which thus gains upon him, gains, for the same reason, on all his fellow-citizens, and in this way we have seen whole nations abandon themselves to a fatal inaction.*

* The effects of such a transformation are strikingly exemplified in an instance given by M. d'Hautpoul, the Minister of War:—"Each soldier," he says, "receives 16 centimes a day for his maintenance. The Government takes these 16 centimes, and undertakes to support him. The consequence is that all have the same rations, and of the same kind, whether it suit them or not. One has too much bread, and throws it away. Another has not enough of butcher's meat, and so on. We have, therefore, made an experiment. We leave to the soldiers the free disposal of these 16 centimes, and we are happy to find that this has been attended with a great improvement in their condition. Each now consults his own tastes and likings, and studies the market prices of what they want to purchase. Generally they have, of their own accord, substituted a portion of butcher's meat for bread. In some instances they buy more bread, in others more meat, in others more vegetables, in others more fish. Their health is improved; they are better pleased; and the State is relieved from a great responsibility."

The reader will understand that it is not as bearing on military affairs that I cite

As long as a certain class of wants and of corresponding satisfactions remains in the domain of liberty, each, in so far as this class is concerned, lays down a rule for himself, which he can modify at pleasure. This would seem to be both natural and fair, seeing that no two men find themselves in exactly the same situation; nor is there any one man whose circumstances do not vary from day to day. In this way, all the human faculties remain in exercise, comparison, judgment, foresight. In this way, too, every good and judicious resolution brings its recompense and every error its chastisement; and experience, that rude substitute for foresight, so far at least fulfils its mission that society goes on improving.

But when the service becomes public, all individual rules of conduct and action disappear, and are mixed up and generalized in a written, coercive, and inflexible law, which is the same for all, which makes no allowance for particular situations, and strikes the noblest faculties of human nature with numbness and torpor.

If State intervention deprive us of all self-government with reference to the services we receive from the public, it deprives us in a still more marked degree of all control with reference to the services which we render in return. This counterpart, this supplementary element in the exchange, is likewise a deduction from our liberty, and is regulated by uniform inflexible rules, by a law passed beforehand, made operative by force, and of which we cannot get rid. In a word, as the services which the State renders us are imposed upon us, those which it demands in return are also imposed upon us, and in all languages take the name of *imposts*.

And here a multitude of theoretical difficulties and inconveniences present themselves; for practically the State surmounts all obstacles by means of an armed force, which is the necessary sequence of every law. But, to confine ourselves to the theory, the transformation of a private into a public service gives rise to these grave questions:—

Will the State under all circumstances demand from each citizen an amount of taxation *equivalent* to the services rendered? This were but fair; and this *equivalence* is exactly the result which we almost infallibly obtain from free and voluntary transactions,

this experiment. I refer to it as calculated to illustrate a radical difference between public and private service, between official regulations and liberty. Would it be better for the State to take from us our means of support, and undertake to feed us, or to leave us both our means of support and the care of feeding ourselves? The same question may be asked with reference to all our wants.

and the bargaining which precedes them. If the design of the State, then, is to realize this *equivalence* (which is only justice), it is not worth while taking this class of services out of the domain of private activity. But equivalence is never thought of, nor can it be. We do not stand higgling and chaffering with public functionaries. The law proceeds on general rules, and cannot make conditions applicable to each individual case. At the utmost, and when it is conceived in a spirit of justice, it aims at a sort of average equivalence, an approximate equivalence, between the two services exchanged. Two principles—namely, the proportionality and the progression of taxation—have appeared in many respects to carry this approximation to its utmost limit. But the slightest reflection will convince us that proportional taxation cannot, any more than progressive taxation, realize the exact equivalence of services exchanged. Public services, after having forcibly deprived the citizens of their liberty, as regards services both rendered and received, have, then, this farther fault of unsettling the value of these services.

Another, and not less grave, inconvenience is, that they destroy, or at least displace, responsibility. To man responsibility is all-important. It is his mover and teacher, his rewarder and avenger. Without it man is no longer a free agent, he is no longer perfectible, no longer a moral being, he learns nothing, he is nothing. He abandons himself to inaction, and becomes a mere unit of the herd.

If it be a misfortune that the sense of responsibility should be extinguished in the individual, it is no less a misfortune that it should be developed in the State in an exaggerated form. Man, however degraded, has always as much light left him as to see the quarter from whence good or evil comes to him; and when the State assumes the charge of all, it becomes responsible for all. Under the dominion of such artificial arrangements, a people which suffers can only lay the blame on its Government, and its only remedy, its only policy, is to overturn it. Hence an inevitable succession of revolutions. I say inevitable, for under such a *régime* the people must necessarily suffer; and the reason of it is that public services, besides disturbing and unsettling values, which is injustice, lead also to the destruction of wealth, which is ruin; ruin and injustice, suffering and discontent—four fatal causes of effervescence in society, which, combined with the displacement of responsibility, cannot fail to bring about political convulsions

like those from which we have been suffering for more than half a century.

Without desiring to indulge in digressions, I cannot help remarking, that when things are organized in this fashion, when Government has assumed gigantic proportions by the successive transformation of free and voluntary transactions into public services, it is to be feared that revolutions, which constitute in themselves so great an evil, have not even the advantage of being a remedy, unless the remedy is forced upon us by experience. The displacement of responsibility has perverted public opinion. The people, accustomed to expect everything from the State, never accuse Government of doing too much, but of not doing enough. They overturn it, and replace it by another, to which they do not say, "Do less," but "Do more;" so that, having fallen into one ditch, they set to work to dig another.

At length the moment comes when their eyes are opened, and it is felt to be necessary to curtail the prerogatives and responsibilities of Government. Here we are stopped by difficulties of another kind. Functionaries alleging *vested rights* rise up and coalesce, and we are averse to bear hard on numerous interests to which we have given an artificial existence. On the other hand, the people have forgotten how to act for themselves. At the moment they have succeeded in reconquering the liberty of which they were in quest, they are afraid of it, and repudiate it. Offer them a free and voluntary system of education:* they believe that all science is about to be extinguished. Offer them religious liberty: they believe that atheism is about to invade us,—so often has it been dinned into their ears that all religion, all wisdom, all science, all learning, all morality, resides in the State or flows from it.

But we shall find a place for such reflections elsewhere, and must now return to the argument.

We set ourselves to discover the true part which competition plays in the development of wealth, and we found that it consisted in giving an advantage in the first instance to the producer; then turning this advantage to the profit of the community; and constantly enlarging the domain of the gratuitous, and consequently the domain of equality.

But when private services become public services, they escape competition, and this fine harmony is suspended. In fact, the

* See the author's pamphlet, entitled *Baccalauréat et Socialisme*.—EDITOR.

functionary is divested of that stimulant which urges on to progress, and how can progress turn to the public advantage when it no longer exists? A public functionary does not act under the spur of self-interest, but under the influence of the law. The law says to him, "You will render to the public such or such a determinate service, and you will receive from it in return a determinate recompense." A little more or a little less zeal has no effect in changing these two fixed terms. On the contrary, private interest whispers in the ear of the free labourer, "The more you do for others, the more others will do for you." In this case, the recompense depends entirely on the efforts of the workman being more or less intense, and more or less skilful. No doubt *esprit de corps*, the desire for advancement, devotion to duty, may prove active stimulants with the functionary; but they never can supply the place of the irresistible incitement of personal interest. All experience confirms this reasoning. Everything which has fallen within the domain of Government routine has remained almost stationary. It is doubtful whether our system of education now is better than it was in the reign of Francis the First; and no one would think of comparing the activity of a government office with the activity of a manufactory.

In proportion, then, as private services enter into the class of public services, they become, at least to a certain extent, sterile and motionless, not to the injury of those who render these services (their salaries are fixed), but to the detriment of the public at large.

Along with these inconveniences, which are immense, not only in a moral and political, but in an economical point of view—inconveniences which, trusting to the sagacity of the reader, I have only sketched—there is sometimes an advantage in substituting collective for individual action. In some kinds of services, the chief merit is regularity and uniformity. It may happen that, under certain circumstances, such a substitution gives rise to economy, and saves, in relation to a given satisfaction, a certain amount of exertion to the community. The question to be resolved, then, is this: What services should remain in the domain of private exertion? What services should pertain to collective or public exertion? The inquiry, which we have just finished, into the essential differences which characterize these two kinds of services, will facilitate the solution of this important problem.

And, first of all, it may be asked, is there any principle to enable

us to distinguish what may legitimately enter the circle of collective action, and what should remain in the circle of private action?

I begin by intimating that what I denominate here *public action* is that great organization which has for rule the *law*, and for means of execution, *force*; in other words, *the Government*. Let it not be said that free and voluntary associations display likewise *collective exertion*. Let it not be supposed that I use the term private action as synonymous with *isolated action*. What I say is, that free and voluntary association belongs still to the domain of private action, for it is one of the forms of exchange, and the most powerful form of all. It does not impair the equivalence of services, it does not affect the appreciation of values, it does not displace responsibilities, it does not exclude free will, it does not destroy competition nor its effects; in a word, it has not *constraint* for its principle.

But the action of Government is made general by *constraint*. It necessarily proceeds on the *compelle intrare*. It acts in form of *law*, and every one must submit to it, because a law implies a *sanction*. No one, I think, will dispute these premises; which are supported by the best of all authorities, the testimony of universal fact. On all sides we have laws, and force to restrain the refractory.

Hence, no doubt, has come the saying that "men, in uniting in society, have sacrificed part of their liberty in order to preserve the remainder,"—a saying in great vogue with those who, confounding *government* with *society*, conclude that the latter is artificial and conventional like the former.

It is evident that this saying does not hold true in the region of free and voluntary transactions. Let two men, determined by the prospect of greater profit and advantage, exchange their services, or unite their efforts, in place of continuing their isolated exertions—is there in this any sacrifice of liberty? Is it to sacrifice liberty to make a better use of it?

The most that can be said is this, that men sacrifice part of their liberty to preserve the remainder, not when they unite in society, but when they subject themselves to a Government, since the necessary mode of action of every Government is force.

Now, even with this modification, the pretended principle is erroneous, as long as Government confines itself to its legitimate functions.

But what are these functions?

It is precisely this special character of having force for their

necessary auxiliary which marks out to us their extent and their limits. I affirm that as *Government acts only by the intervention of force, its action is legitimate only where the intervention of force is itself legitimate.*

Now, where force interposes legitimately, it is not to sacrifice liberty, but to make it more respected. So that this pretended axiom, which has been represented as the basis of political science, and which has been shown to be false as far as society is concerned, is equally false as regards Government. It is always gratifying to me to see these melancholy theoretical discordances disappear before a closer and more searching examination.

In what cases is the employment of force legitimate? In one case, and, I believe, in only one—*the case of legitimate defence.* If this be so, the foundation of Government is fully established, as well as its legitimate limits.*

What is individual right?

The right which an individual possesses to enter freely and voluntarily into bargains and transactions with his fellow-citizens, which give rise, as far as they are concerned, to a reciprocal right. When is this right violated? When one of the parties encroaches on the liberty of the other. In that case, it is incorrect to say, as is frequently done, "There is an excess, an abuse of liberty." We should say, "There is a want, a destruction of liberty." An excess of liberty, no doubt, if we regard only the aggressor, but a destruction of liberty, if we regard the victim, or even if we regard the phenomenon as a whole, as we ought to do.

The right of the man whose liberty is attacked, or, which comes to the same thing, whose property, faculties, or labour is attacked, is to defend them *even by force;* and this is in fact what men do everywhere, and always, when they can.

Hence may be deduced the right of a number of men of any sort to take counsel together, and associate, in order to defend, *even by their joint force,* individual liberty and property.

But an individual has no right to employ force for any other purpose. I cannot legitimately *force* my neighbours to be industrious, sober, economical, generous, learned, devout; but I can legitimately force them to be just.

* The author, in a previous work, had sought the solution of the same question. The subject of his inquiry was the legitimate province of law. All the developments in the pamphlet, entitled *La Loi*, are applicable to the subject he is now discussing. We refer the reader to that *brochure*.—EDITOR.

For the same reason the collective force cannot be legitimately applied to develop the love of industry, of sobriety, of economy, of generosity, of science, of religious belief; but it may be legitimately applied to ensure the predominance of justice, and vindicate each man's right?

For where can we seek for the origin of collective right but in individual right?

The deplorable mania of our times is the desire to give an independent existence to pure abstractions, to imagine a city without citizens, a human nature without human beings, a whole without parts, an aggregate without the individuals who compose it. They might as well say, "Here is a man, suppose him without members, viscera, organs, body, soul, or any of the elements of which he is composed—still here is a man."

If a right does not exist in any of the individuals of what for brevity's sake we call a nation, how should it exist in the nation itself? How, above all, should it exist in that fraction of a nation which exercises delegated rights of government? How could individuals delegate rights which they do not themselves possess?

We must, then, regard as a fundamental principle in politics, this incontestable truth, that between individuals the intervention of force is legitimate only in the case of legitimate defence; and that a collective body of men cannot have recourse to force legally, but within the same limit.

Now, it is of the very essence of Government to act upon individuals by way of constraint. Then it can have no other rational functions than the legitimate defence of individual rights, it can have no delegated authority except to secure respect to the lives and property of all.

Observe that when a Government goes beyond these bounds, it enters on an illimited career, and cannot escape this consequence, not only that it goes beyond its mission, but annihilates it, which constitutes the most monstrous of contradictions.

In truth, when the State has caused to be respected this fixed and invariable line which separates the rights of the citizens, when it has maintained among them justice, what could it do more without itself breaking through that barrier, the guardianship of which has been intrusted to it—in other words, without destroying with its own hands, and by force, that very liberty and property which had been placed under its safeguard? Beyond the administration and enforcement of justice, I defy you to imagine an intervention of Government

which is not an injustice. Allege, as long as you choose, acts inspired by the purest philanthropy, encouragements held out to virtue and to industry, premiums, favour, and direct protection, gifts said to be gratuitous, initiatives styled generous; behind all these fair appearances, or, if you will, these fair realities, I will show you other realities less gratifying; the rights of some persons violated for the benefit of others, liberties sacrificed, rights of property usurped, faculties limited, spoliations consummated. And can the people possibly behold a spectacle more melancholy, more painful, than that of the collective force employed in perpetrating crimes which it is its special duty to repress?

In principle, it is enough that the Government has at its disposal, as a necessary instrument, *force*, in order to enable us to discover what the private services are which can legitimately be converted into *public services*. They are those which have for their object the maintenance of liberty, property, and individual right, the prevention of crime—in a word, everything which involves the *public security*.

Governments have yet another mission.

There are in all countries a certain amount of common property, enjoyed by the citizens jointly—rivers, forests, roads. On the other hand, unfortunately, there are also debts. It is the duty of Government to administer this active and passive portion of the public domain.

In fine, from these two functions there flows another,—that of levying the contributions which are necessary for the *public service*.

Thus:

To watch over the public security.

To administer common property.

To levy taxes.

Such I believe to be the legitimate circle within which Government functions ought to be circumscribed, and to which they should be brought back if they have gone beyond it.

This opinion, I know, runs counter to received opinions. "What!" it will be said, "you wish to reduce Government to play the part of a judge and a police-officer! You would take away from it all initiative! You would restrain it from giving a lively impulse to learning, to arts, to commerce, to navigation, to agriculture, to moral and religious ideas; you would despoil it of its fairest attribute, that of opening to the people the road of progress!"

To people who talk in this way, I should like to put a few questions.

Where has God placed the motive spring of human conduct, and the aspiration after progress? Is it in all men? or is it exclusively in those among them who have received, or usurped, the delegated authority of a legislator, or the patent of a placeman? Does every one of us not carry in his organization, in his whole being, that boundless, restless principle of action called *desire?* When our first and most urgent wants are supplied, are there not formed within us concentric and expansive circles of desires of an order more and more elevated? Does the love of arts, of letters, of science, of moral and religious truth, does a thirst for the solution of those problems which concern our present and future existence, descend from collective bodies of men to individuals, from abstractions to realities, from mere words to living and sentient beings?

If you set out with this assumption—absurd upon the face of it—that moral energy resides in the State, and that the nation is passive, do you not place morals, doctrines, opinions, wealth, all which constitutes individual life, at the mercy of men in power?

Then, in order to enable it to discharge the formidable duty which you would intrust to it, has the State any resources of its own? Is it not obliged to take everything of which it disposes, down to the last penny, from the citizens themselves? If it be from individuals that it demands the means of execution, individuals have realized these means. It is a contradiction then to pretend that individuality is passive and inert. And why have individuals created these resources? To minister to their own satisfactions. What does the State do when it seizes on these resources? It does not bring satisfactions into existence, it *displaces* them. It deprives the man who earned them in order to endow a man who has no right to them. Charged to chastise injustice, it perpetrates it.

Will it be said that in displacing satisfactions it purifies them, and renders them more moral?—that the wealth which individuals had devoted to gross and sensual wants, the State has devoted to moral purposes? Who dare affirm that it is advantageous to invert violently, *by force,* by means of spoliation, the natural order according to which the wants and desires of men are developed?—that it is moral to take a morsel of bread from the hungry peasant, in order to bring within the reach of the inhabitants of our large towns the doubtful morality of theatrical entertainments?

And then it must be remembered, that you cannot displace wealth without displacing labour and population. Any arrange-

ment you can make must be artificial and precarious when it is thus substituted for a solid and regular order of things reposing on the immutable laws of nature.

There are people who believe that by circumscribing the province of Government you enfeeble it. Numerous functions, and numerous agents, they think, give the State the solidity of a broader basis. But this is pure illusion. If the State cannot overstep the limits of its proper and determinate functions without becoming an instrument of injustice, of ruin, and of spoliation—without unsettling the natural distribution of labour, of enjoyments, of capital, and of population—without creating commercial stoppages, industrial crises, and pauperism—without enlarging the proportion of crimes and offences—without recurring to more and more energetic means of repression—without exciting discontent and disaffection,—how is it possible to discover a guarantee for stability in these accumulated elements of disorder?

You complain of the revolutionary tendencies of men, but without sufficient reflection. When in a great country we see private services invaded, and converted into public services, the Government laying bold of one-third of the wealth produced by the citizens, the law converted into an engine of spoliation by the citizens themselves, thus impairing, under pretence of establishing, the equivalence of services—when we see population and labour displaced by legislation, a deeper and deeper gulf interposed between wealth and poverty, capital, which should give employment to an increasing population, prevented from accumulating, entire classes ground down by the hardest privations—when we see Governments taking to themselves credit for any prosperity which may be observable, proclaiming themselves the movers and originators of everything, and thus accepting responsibility for all the evils which afflict society,—we are only astonished that revolutions do not occur more frequently, and we admire the sacrifices which are made by the people to the cause of public order and tranquillity.

But if laws and the Governments which enact laws confined themselves within the limits I have indicated, how could revolutions occur? If each citizen were free, he would doubtless be less exposed to suffering, and if, at the same time, the feeling of responsibility were brought to bear on him from all sides, how should he ever take it into his head to attribute his sufferings to a law, to a Government which concerned itself no farther with him than to repress his acts of injustice and protect him from the

injustice of others? Do we ever find a village rising against the authority of the local magistrate?

The influence of liberty on the cause of order is sensibly felt in the United States. There, all, save the administration of justice and of public property, is left to the free and voluntary transactions of the citizens; and there, accordingly, we find fewer of the elements and chances of revolution than in any other country of the world. What semblance of interest could the citizens of such a country have in changing the established order of things by violence, when, on the one hand, this order of things clashes with no man's interests, and, on the other, may be legally and readily modified if necessary?

But I am wrong. There are two active causes of revolution at work in the United States—slavery and commercial restriction. It is notorious that these two questions are constantly placing in jeopardy the public peace and the federal union. Now, is it possible to conceive a more decisive argument in support of the thesis I am now maintaining? Have we not here an instance of the law acting in direct antagonism to what ought to be the design and aim of all laws? Is not this a case of law and public force sanctioning, strengthening, perpetuating, systematizing, and protecting oppression and spoliation, in place of fulfilling its legitimate mission of protecting liberty and property? As regards slavery, the law says, "I shall create a force, at the expense of the citizens, not to maintain each in his rights, but to annihilate altogether the rights of a portion of the inhabitants." As regards tariffs, the law says, "I shall create a force, at the expense of the citizens, not to ensure the freedom of their bargains and transactions, but to destroy that freedom, to impair the equivalence of services, to give to one citizen the liberty of two, and to deprive another of liberty altogether. My function is to commit injustice, which I nevertheless visit with the severest punishment when committed by the citizens themselves without my interposition."

It is not, then, because we have few laws and few functionaries, or, in other words, because we have few public services, that revolutions are to be feared; but, on the contrary, because we have many laws, many functionaries, and many public services. Public services, the law which regulates them, the force which establishes them, are, from their nature, never neutral. They may be enlarged without danger, on the contrary with advantage, when they are necessary to the vigorous enforcement of justice; but carried beyond this

point, they are so many instruments of legal oppression and spoliation, so many causes of disorder and revolutionary ferment.

Shall I venture to describe the poisonous immorality which is infused into all the veins of the body politic, when the law thus sets itself, upon principle, to indulge the plundering propensities of the citizens? Attend a meeting of the national representatives when the question happens to turn on bounties, encouragements, favours, or restrictions. See with what shameless rapacity all endeavour to secure a share of the spoil,—spoil which, as individuals, they would blush to touch. The very man who would regard himself as a highway robber, if, meeting me on the frontier and clapping a pistol to my head, he prevented me from concluding a bargain which was for my advantage, makes no scruple whatever in proposing and voting a law which substitutes the public force for his own, and subjects me to the very same restriction at my own expense. In this respect, what a melancholy spectacle France presents at this very moment! All classes are suffering, and in place of demanding the abolition for ever of all legal spoliation, each turns to the law, and says, "You who can do everything, you who have the public force at your disposal, you who can bring good out of evil, be pleased to rob and plunder all other classes, to put money in my pocket. Force them to come to my shop, or pay me bounties and premiums, give my family gratuitous education, lend me money without interest," etc.

It is in this way that the law becomes a source of demoralization, and if anything ought to surprise us, it is that the propensity to individual plunder does not make more progress, when the moral sense of the nation is thus perverted by legislation itself.

The deplorable thing is, that spoliation when thus sanctioned by law, and opposed by no individual scruple, ends by becoming quite a learned theory with an attendant train of professors, journals, doctors, legislators, sophisms, and subtleties. Among the traditional quibbles which are brought forward in its support we may remark this one, namely, that, *cæteris paribus*, an enlargement of *demand* is of advantage to those by whom labour is supplied, seeing that the new relation between a more active demand and a supply which is stationary is what increases the *value* of the service. From these premises the conclusion follows that spoliation is of advantage to everybody: to the plundering class, which it enriches directly; to the plundered class, by its reflex influence. The plundering class having become richer finds itself in a situation to

enlarge the circle of its enjoyments, and this it cannot do without creating a larger *demand* for the *services* of the class which has been robbed. Now, as regards each service, an enlargement of demand is an increase of value. The classes, then, who are legally plundered are too happy to be robbed, since the profit arising from the theft thus redounds to them, and helps to find them employment.

As long as the law confined itself to robbing the many for the benefit of the few, this quibble appeared specious, and was never invoked but with success. "Let us hand over to the rich," it was said, "the taxes levied from the poor, and we shall thus augment the capital of the wealthy classes. The rich will indulge in luxury, and luxury will give employment to the poor." And all, poor included, regarded this recipe as infallible; and for having exposed its hollowness, I have been long regarded, and am still regarded, as an enemy of the working classes.

But since the revolution of February the poor have had a voice in the making of our laws. Have they required that the law should cease to sanction spoliation? Not at all. The sophism of the rebound, of the reflex influence, has got too firmly into their heads. What is it they have asked for? That the law should become impartial, and consent to rob all classes in their turn. They have asked for gratis education, gratis advances of capital, friendly societies founded by the State, progressive taxation, etc. And then the rich have set themselves to cry out, "How scandalous! All is over with us! New barbarians threaten society with an irruption!" To the pretensions of the poor they have opposed a desperate resistance, first with the bayonet, and then with the ballot-box. But for all this, have the rich given up spoliation? They have not even dreamt of that; and the argument of the rebound still serves as the pretext.

Were this system of spoliation carried on by them directly, and without the intervention of the law, the sophism would become transparent. Were you to take from the pocket of the workman a franc to pay your ticket to the theatre, would you have the face to say to him, "My good friend, this franc will circulate and give employment to you and others of your class"? Or if you did, would he not be justified in answering, "The franc will circulate just as well if you do not steal it from me. It will go to the baker instead of the scene-painter. It will procure me bread in place of procuring you amusement."

We may remark also that the sophism of the rebound may be

invoked by the poor in their turn. They may say in their turn to the rich, "Let the law assist us in robbing you. We shall consume more cloth, and that will benefit your manufactures; more meat, and that will benefit your land estates; more sugar, and that will benefit your shipping."

Unhappy, thrice unhappy, nation in which such questions are raised, in which no one thinks of making the law the rule of equity, but an instrument of plunder to fill his own pockets, and applies the whole power of his intellect to try to find excuses among the more remote and complicated effects of spoliation. In support of these reflections it may not be out of place to add here an extract from the debate which took place at a meeting of the *Conseil général des Manufactures, de l'Agriculture, et du Commerce,* on Saturday the 27th April 1850.*

* Here ends the M.S. We refer the reader to the author's pamphlet entitled *Spoliation et Loi*, in the second part of which he has exposed the sophisms which were given utterance to at this meeting of the *Conseil général.*

On the subjects of the six chapters intended to follow this, under the titles of Taxation, Machinery, Free Trade, Intermediaries, Raw Materials, and Luxury, we refer he reader, 1*st*, to the *Discours sur l'Impôt des Boissons*, inserted in the second edition of the pamphlet, *Incompatibilités Parlementaires;* 2*dly*, to the pamphlet entitled *Ce qu'on voit et Ce qu'on ne voit pas;* 3*dly*, to the *Sophismes Économiques.*

XVIII.

DISTURBING CAUSES.

In what state would human society have been, had the transactions of mankind never been in any shape infected with force or fraud, oppression or deceit?

Would Justice and Liberty have given rise inevitably to Inequality and Monopoly?

To find an answer to these questions it would seem to me to be necessary to study the nature of human transactions in their essence, in their origin, in their consequences, and in the consequences of these consequences, down to the final result; and this apart from the consideration of contingent disturbances which might engender injustice; for it will be readily granted that injustice is not of the essence of free and voluntary transactions.

That the entry of Injustice into the world was inevitable, and that society cannot get rid of it, may be argued plausibly, and I think even conclusively, if we take man as he exists, with his passions, his egotism, his ignorance, and his original improvidence. We must also, therefore, direct our attention to the origin and effects of Injustice.

But it is not the less true that economical science must set out by explaining the theory of human transactions, assuming them to be free and voluntary, just as physiology explains the nature and relations of our organs, apart from the consideration of the disturbing causes which modify these relations.

Services, as we have seen, are exchanged for services, and the great *desideratum* is the equivalence of the services thus exchanged.

The best chance, it would seem, of arriving at this equivalence, is that it should be produced under the influence of Liberty, and that every man should be allowed to judge for himself.

We know that men may be mistaken; but we know also that they have the power given them of rectifying their mistakes; and the longer, as it appears to us, that error is persisted in, the nearer we approximate to its rectification.

Everything which restrains liberty would seem to disturb the equivalence of services, and everything which disturbs the equivalence of services engenders inequality in an exaggerated degree, endowing some with unmerited opulence, entailing on others poverty equally unmerited, together with the destruction of national wealth, and an attendant train of evils, heartburnings, disturbances, convulsions, and revolutions.

We shall not go the length of saying that Liberty—or the equivalence of services—produces absolute equality; for we believe in nothing absolute in what concerns man. But we think that Liberty tends to make men approximate towards a common level, which is movable and always rising.

We think also that the inequality which may still remain under a free *régime* is either the result of accidental circumstances, or the chastisement of faults and vices, or the compensation of other advantages set opposite to those of wealth; and, consequently, that this inequality ought not to introduce among men any feeling of irritation.

In a word, we believe that *Liberty is Harmony*. . . . .

But in order to discover whether this harmony exists in reality, or only in our own imagination, whether it be in us a perception or only an aspiration, we must subject free transactions to the test of scientific inquiry; we must study facts, with their relations and consequences.

This is what we have endeavoured to do.

We have seen that although countless obstacles are interposed between the wants of man and his satisfactions, so that in a state of isolation he could not exist—yet by the union of forces, the separation of occupations, in a word, by exchange, his faculties are developed to such an extent as to enable him gradually to overcome the first obstacles, to encounter the second and overcome them also, and so on in a progression as much more rapid as exchange is rendered more easy by the increasing density of population.

We have seen that his intelligence places at his disposal means of action more and more numerous, energetic, and perfect, that in proportion as capital increases, his absolute share in the produce

increases, and his relative share diminishes, while both the absolute and relative share falling to the labourer goes on constantly increasing. This is the primary and most powerful cause of equality.

We have seen that that admirable instrument of production called land, that marvellous laboratory in which are prepared all things necessary for the food, clothing, and shelter of man, has been given him gratuitously by the Creator; that although the land is nominally appropriated, its productive action cannot be so, but remains gratuitous throughout the whole range of human transactions.

We have seen that Property has not only this negative effect of not encroaching on community; but that it works directly and constantly in enlarging its domain; and this is a second cause of equality, seeing that the more abundant the common fund becomes, the more is the inequality of property effaced.

We have seen that under the influence of liberty services tend to acquire their normal value, that is to say, a value proportionate to the labour. This is a third cause of equality.

For these reasons we conclude that there is a tendency to the establishment among men of a natural level, not by bringing them back to a retrograde position, or allowing them to remain stationary, but urging them on to a state which is constantly progressive.

In fine, we have seen that it is not the tendency of the laws of Value, of Interest, of Rent, of Population, or any other great natural law, to introduce dissonance into the beautiful order of society, as crude science has endeavoured to persuade us, but, on the contrary, that all these laws lead to harmony.

Having reached this point, I think I hear the reader cry out, "The Economists are optimists with a vengeance! It is in vain that suffering, poverty, inadequate wages, pauperism, the desertion of children, starvation, crime, rebellion, inequality, are before their eyes; they chant complacently the harmony of the social laws, and turn away from a hideous spectacle which mars their enjoyment of the theory in which they are wrapt up. They shun the region of realities, in order to take refuge, like the Utopian dreamers whom they blame, in a region of chimeras. More illogical than the Socialists or the Communists themselves—who confess the existence of suffering, feel it, describe it, abhor it, and only commit the error of prescribing ineffectual, impracticable, and empirical remedies—the Economists either deny the existence of

suffering, or are insensible to it, if, indeed, they do not engender it, calling out to diseased and distempered society, '*Laissez faire, laissez passer;* all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds.'"

In the name of science, I repel, I repudiate with all my might, such reproaches and such interpretations of our words. We see the existence of suffering as clearly as our opponents. Like them, we deplore it, like them we endeavour to discover its causes, like them we are ready to combat them. But we state the question differently. "Society," say they, "such as liberty of labour and commercial transactions (that is to say, the free play of natural laws) has made it, is detestable. Break, then, the wheels of this ill-going machine, liberty (which they take care to nickname competition, or oftener anarchical competition), and substitute for them, by force, new wheels of our invention." No sooner said than done. Millions of inventions are paraded; and this we might naturally expect, for to imaginary space there are no limits.

As for us, after having studied the natural and providential laws of society, we affirm that these laws are harmonious. These laws admit the existence of evil, for they are brought into play by men,—by beings subject to error and to suffering. But in this mechanism evil has itself a function to perform, which is to circumscribe more and more its own limits and ultimately to check its own action, by preparing for man warnings, corrections, experience, knowledge; all things which are comprehended and summed up in the word, Improvement.

We add that it is not true that liberty prevails among men, nor is it true that the providential laws exert all their action. If they do act, at least, it is to repair slowly and painfully the disturbing action of ignorance and error. Don't arraign us, then, for using the words *laissez faire, let alone;* for we do not mean by that, let man alone when he is doing wrong. What we mean is this: Study the providential laws, admire them, and *allow them to operate.* Remove the obstacles which they encounter from abuses arising from force and fraud, and you will see accomplished in human society this double manifestation of progress—equalization in amelioration.

For, in short, of two things one: either the interests of men are, in their own nature, concordant, or they are in their nature discordant. When we talk of one's Interest, we talk of a thing towards which a man gravitates necessarily, unavoidably; otherwise it would cease to be called interest. If men gravitated

towards something else, that other thing would be termed their interest. If men's interests, then, are concordant, all that is necessary in order to the realization of harmony and happiness is that these interests should be understood, since men naturally pursue their interest. This is all we contend for; and this is the reason why we say, *Eclaircz et laissez faire*, Enlighten men, and let them alone. If men's interests are in their nature and essence discordant, then you are right, and there is no other way of producing harmony, but by forcing, thwarting, and running counter to these interests. A whimsical harmony, truly, which can result only from an external and despotic action directed against the interests of all! For you can easily understand that men will not tamely allow themselves to be thwarted; and in order to obtain their acquiescence in your inventions, you must either begin by being stronger than the whole human family, or else you must be able to succeed in deceiving them with reference to their true interests. In short, on the hypothesis that men's interests are naturally discordant, the best thing which could happen would be their being all deceived in this respect.

Force and imposture, these are your sole resources. I defy you to find another, unless you admit that men's interests are harmonious,—and if you grant that, you are with us, and will say, as we say, Allow the providential laws to act.

Now, this you will not do; and, therefore, I must repeat that your starting-point is the antagonism of interests. This is the reason why you will not allow these interests to come to a mutual arrangement and understanding freely and voluntarily; this is the reason why you advocate arbitrary measures, and repudiate liberty; and you are consistent.

But take care. The struggle which is approaching will not be exclusively between you and society. Such a struggle you lay your account with, the thwarting of men's interests being the very object you have in view. The battle will also rage among you, the inventors and organizers of artificial societies, yourselves; for there are thousands of you, and there will soon be tens of thousands, all entertaining and advocating different views. What will you do? I see very clearly what you will do,—you will endeavour to get possession of the Government. That is the only force capable of overcoming all resistance. Will some one among you succeed? While he is engaged in thwarting and opposing the Government, he will find himself set upon by all

the other inventors, equally desirous to seize upon the Government; and their chances of success will be so much the greater, seeing that they will be aided by that public disaffection which has been stirred up by the previous opposition to their interests. Here, then, we are launched into a stormy sea of eternal revolutions, and with no other object than the solution of this question. How, and by whom, can the interests of mankind be most effectually thwarted ?

Let me not be accused of exaggeration. All this is forced upon us if men's interests are naturally discordant, for on this hypothesis you never can get out of the dilemma, that either these interests will be left to themselves, and then disorder will follow, or some one must be strong enough to run counter to them, and in that case we shall still have disorder.

It is true that there is a third course, as I have already indicated. It consists in deceiving men with reference to their true interests; and this course being above the power of a mere mortal, the shortest way is for the *organisateur* to erect himself into an oracle. This is a part which these Utopian dreamers, when they dare, never fail to play, until they become Ministers of State. They fill their writings with mystical cant; and it is with these paper kites that they find out how the wind sits, and make their first experiments on public credulity. But, unfortunately for them, success in such experiments is not very easily achieved in the nineteenth century.

We confess, then, frankly that, in order to get rid of these inextricable difficulties, it is much to be desired that, having studied human interests, we should find them harmonious. The duty of writers and that of governments become in that case rational and easy.

As mankind frequently mistake their true interests, our duty as writers ought to be to explain these interests, to describe them, to make them understood, for we may be quite certain that if men once see their interest, they will follow it. As a man who is mistaken with reference to his own interests injures those of the public (this results from their harmony), the duty of Government will be to bring back the small body of dissentients and violators of the providential laws into the path of justice, which is identical with that of utility. In other words, the single mission of Government will be to establish the dominion of justice; and it will no longer have to embarrass itself with the painful endeavour to produce, at great cost, and by encroaching on individual liberty, a

Harmony which is self-created, and which Government action never fails to destroy.

After what has been said, we shall not be regarded as such fanatical advocates of social harmony as to deny that it may be, and frequently is, disturbed. I will even add that, in my opinion, the disturbances of the social order, which are caused by blind passions, ignorance, and error, are infinitely greater and more prolonged than are generally supposed; and it is these disturbing causes which we are about to make the subject of our inquiry.

Man comes into the world having implanted in him ineradicably the desire of happiness and aversion from pain. Seeing that he acts in obedience to this impulse, we cannot deny that personal interest is the moving spring of the individual, of all individuals, and, consequently, of society. And seeing that personal interest, in the economic sphere, is the motive of human actions and the mainspring of society, Evil must proceed from it as well as Good; and it is in this motive power that we must seek to discover harmony and the causes by which that harmony is disturbed.

The constant aspiration of self-interest is to silence want, or, to speak more generally, desire, by satisfaction.

Between these two terms, which are essentially personal and intransmissible, want and satisfaction, there is interposed a mean term which is transmissible and exchangeable,—effort.

Over all this mechanism we have placed the faculty of comparing, of judging—mind, intelligence. But human intelligence is fallible. We may be mistaken. That is beyond dispute; for were any one to assert that man cannot err, we should at once conclude that it was unnecessary to hold any farther argument with him.

We may be mistaken in many ways. We may, for instance, form a wrong appreciation of the relative importance of our wants. In this case, were we living in a state of isolation, we should give to our efforts a direction not in accordance with our true interests. In a state of society, and under the operation of the law of exchange, the effect would be the same; for then we should direct demand and remuneration to services of a kind either frivolous or hurtful, and so give a wrong direction to labour.

We may also err, from being ignorant that a satisfaction which we ardently seek for can only remove a suffering by becoming the source of still greater sufferings. There is scarcely any effect which

may not in its turn become a cause. Foresight has been given us to enable us to observe the concatenation of effects, so that we may not sacrifice the future to the present; but we are frequently deficient in foresight.

Here, then, is the first source of evil, error arising from the feebleness of our judgment or the force of our passions; and it belongs principally to the domain of morals. In this case, as the error and the passion are individual, the resulting evil must, to a certain extent, be individual also; and reflection, experience, and the feeling of responsibility are its proper correctives.

Errors of this class, however, may assume a social character, and, when erected into a system, may give rise to widespread suffering. There are countries, for example, in which the governing power is strongly convinced that the prosperity of nations is measured, not by the amount of wants which are satisfied, but by the amount of efforts, whatever may be their results. The division of labour assists powerfully this illusion. When we observe that each profession sets itself to overcome a certain species of obstacle, we imagine that the existence of that obstacle is the source of wealth. In such countries, when vanity, frivolity, or a false love of glory are predominant passions, and provoke corresponding desires, and determine a portion of the national industry in that direction, Governments believe that all will be over with them if their subjects come to be reformed and rendered more moral. What will become now, they say, of milliners, cooks, grooms, embroiderers, dancers, lace-manufacturers, etc.? They do not reflect that the human heart is always large enough to contain enough of honest, reasonable, and legitimate desires to afford employment and support to labour; that the business is not to suppress desires, but to rectify and purify them; and that labour, consequently, following the same evolution, may have its direction changed and still be carried on to the same extent as before. In countries where these melancholy doctrines prevail, we hear it frequently said, "It is unfortunate that morals and industry cannot march side by side. We should desire, indeed, that the citizens should be moral, but we cannot allow them to become idle and poor. This is the reason why we must continue to make laws which are favourable to luxury. If necessary, we impose taxes on the people; and for the sake of the people, and to ensure them employment, we charge Kings, Presidents, Ambassadors, Ministers, with the duty of *representing* them." All this is said and done

in the best possible faith; and the people themselves acquiesce in it with a good grace. It is very clear that when luxury and frivolity thus become a legislative affair, regulated, decreed, imposed, systematized, by public force, the law of Responsibility loses all its moral power.* . . . . .

* The author was unable to continue this examination of errors—which are for those who are misled by them a nearly immediate cause of suffering—nor to describe another class of errors, which make their appearance in the shape of violence and fraud, and the first effects of which bear heavily on others. His notes contain nothing on the subject of *disturbing causes* but the preceding fragment and that which follows. We would also refer the reader to the first chapter of the second series of *Sophisms*, entitled *Spoliation*.—EDITOR.

XIX.

WAR.

Of all the circumstances which contribute to impart to nations their distinctive character and aspect, and to form and modify their genius, their moral condition, their customs, and their laws, the one which exerts a far more powerful influence than all the rest, because it includes all the rest, is the manner in which they provide for their subsistence. For this observation we are indebted to Charles Comte, and we have reason to be surprised that it has not had a more prominent place given to it in the moral and political sciences.

This circumstance, in fact, acts upon the human race in two ways, and with equal power in both,—by its continuity, and by its universality. To subsist, to better one's condition, to bring up a family, are not affairs of time, or place, or taste, or opinion, or choice; they are the daily, constant, and unavoidable concern of all men, at all times, and in all countries.

Everywhere, the greater part of their moral, intellectual, and physical force is devoted directly or indirectly to create and replace the means of subsistence. The hunter, the fisher, the shepherd, the agriculturist, the manufacturer, the merchant, the labourer, the artisan, the capitalist,—all think first of all how they are to live (prosaic as the avowal may seem), and then how to live better and better, if they can. The proof of it is that it is only for this end that they are hunters, fishers, manufacturers, agriculturists, etc. In the same way, the public functionary, the soldier, the magistrate, enter upon their careers in order to ensure the supply of their wants. We do not necessarily charge a man with want of devotion or disinterestedness when we quote the proverb, *The priest lives by the altar*, for before be belonged to the priesthood he belonged to humanity; and if at this moment he sits down to write a book against this vulgar view of human nature, the sale of his book will demolish his argument.

God forbid that I should seek to deny the existence of self-denial and disinterestedness. But it must be granted that they are exceptional, and it is because they are so that they merit and call forth our admiration. If we consider human nature in its entirety, without having made a previous covenant with the demon of sentimentalism, we must allow that disinterested efforts bear no comparison, as respects their number, with those which are called forth by the hard necessities of our condition. And it is because those efforts, which constitute the aggregate of our employments, engross so large a portion of each man's life, that they cannot fail to exert a powerful influence on national character.

M. Saint-Marc Girardin says somewhere or other that he has been led to acknowledge the relative insignificance of political forms in comparison with those great general laws which their employments and their wants impose upon nations. "Do you desire to know the condition of a people?" says he, "ask not how they are governed, but how they are employed."

As a general view, this is just; but the author hastens to falsify it by converting it into a system. The importance of political forms has been exaggerated; and what does he do? He denies their importance altogether, or acknowledges it only to laugh at it. Forms of government, he says, do not interest us but on the day of an election, or when we are reading the newspapers. Monarchy or Republic, Aristocracy or Democracy, what matters it? And what conclusion does he arrive at? In maintaining that *infant* nations resemble each other, whatever their political constitution happens to be, he assimilates the United States to ancient Egypt, because in both countries gigantic works have been executed. Americans clear lands, dig canals, construct railways, and they do all this for themselves, because they are a democracy, and their own masters. The Egyptians raised temples, pyramids, obelisks, and palaces for their kings and their priests, because they were slaves. And yet we are told that the difference is a mere affair of form, not worth regarding, or which we should regard merely to laugh at. Alas! how the contagion of classical lore corrupts and misleads its superstitious votaries!

M. Saint-Marc Girardin, still proceeding on his general proposition that the prevailing occupations of a nation determine its genius, soon after remarks that formerly we were occupied with war and religion, but nowadays with commerce and manufactures. This is the reason why former generations bore a warlike and religious impress.

Rousseau had long before remarked that the care for subsistence was the prevailing occupation only of some nations, and those the most prosaic; and that other nations, more worthy of the name, had devoted themselves to nobler exertions.

Now, in this have not both M. Saint-Marc Girardin and Rousseau been the dupes of an historical illusion? Have they not mistaken the amusements, the diversions, or the pretexts and instruments of despotism, which give employment to some of the people for the occupations of all? And has the illusion not arisen from this, that historians are always telling us about the class which does not work, never about the class which does; and in this way we come to regard the first of these classes as the entire nation.

I cannot help thinking that among the Greeks, among the Romans, among the people of the Middle Ages, men just did what they do now, and were subject to wants so pressing and so constantly recurring, that they were obliged to provide for them under pain of death. Hence I cannot help concluding that such employments then, as at present, formed the principal and absorbing occupation of the great bulk of the human race.

This much is certain, that very few people succeeded in living without work, on the labour of the subject masses. The small number of idlers who did so caused their slaves to construct for them sumptuous palaces, magnificent castles, and sombre fortresses. They loved to surround themselves with all the sensual enjoyments of life, and with all the monuments of art. They amused themselves by descanting on philosophy and cosmogony; and, above all, they cultivated assiduously the two sciences to which they owed their supremacy and their enjoyments,—the science of force, and the science of fraud.

Although below this aristocracy there existed countless multitudes engaged in creating for themselves the means of sustaining life, and for their oppressors the means of revelling in pleasures, yet as historians have never made the slightest allusion to those multitudes, we have come to forget their existence, and never taken them into account. Our regards are exclusively fixed on the aristocracy. To it we give the name of *Old or Feudal Families;* and we imagine that the men of those times maintained themselves without having recourse to commerce, to manufactures, to labour, to vulgar occupations. We admire their disinterestedness, their generosity, their taste for the arts, their spirituality, their disdain of servile employments, their elevation of mind and sentiment;

and, in high-sounding language, we assert that at one epoch nations cared only for military glory, at another for the arts, at another for philosophy, at another for religion, at another for virtue. We sincerely lament our own condition, and give utterance to all sorts of sarcastic observations, to the effect that, in spite of these sublime models, we are unable to attain the same elevation, but are reduced to assign to labour and its vulgar merits a prominent place in the system of modern life.

Let us console ourselves with the reflection, that it occupied a no less important place among the ancients. Only, the drudgery of labour, from which a limited number of people had succeeded in freeing themselves, fell with redoubled weight upon the enslaved masses, to the great detriment of justice, of liberty, of property, of wealth, of equality, and of progress. This is the first of those disturbing causes to which I propose to solicit the attention of the reader.

The means, then, to which men have recourse in order to obtain the means of subsistence cannot fail to exert a powerful influence on their condition, physical, moral, intellectual, economical, and political. Who can doubt that if we were in a situation to observe different tribes of men, one of which had devoted itself exclusively to the chase, another to fishing, a third to agriculture, a fourth to navigation, we should discover very considerable differences in their ideas, in their opinions, in their habits, their manners, their customs, their laws, and their religion? No doubt we should find human nature everywhere essentially the same; these various laws, customs, and religions would have many points in common; and such points we designate as the general laws of human society.

Be this as it may, there can be no doubt that in our great modern societies, we find at work all, or nearly all, the various means of providing subsistence,—fisheries, agriculture, manufactures, commerce, arts, and sciences, although in different proportions in different countries. This is the reason why we do not discover among nations so situated such marked and striking differences as would be apparent if each devoted itself to one of these occupations exclusively.

But if the nature of the occupations in which a people is engaged exercises a powerful influence on its morality, its desires, and its tastes,—its morality in its turn exercises a great influence upon its occupations, at least upon the proportion which obtains between

these occupations. But I shall not dwell on this observation, which I have presented in another part of this work,* but hasten to the principal subject of the present chapter.

A man (and the same thing may be said of a people) may procure the means of existence in two ways,—by creating them, or by stealing them.

Each of these two great sources of acquisition presents a variety of methods.

We may *create* the means of existence by the chase, by fishing, by agriculture, etc.

We may *steal* them by breach of trust, by violence, by force, fraud, war, etc.

If, confining ourselves to the circle of one or other of these two categories, we find that the predominance of one of these methods establishes so marked a difference in the character of nations, how much greater must the difference be between a nation which lives by production, and a nation which lives by spoliation?

For it is not one of our faculties only, but all of them, which the necessity of providing for our subsistence brings into exercise; and what can be more fitted to modify the social condition of nations than what thus modifies all the human faculties?

This consideration, important as it is, has been so little regarded, that I must dwell upon it for an instant.

The realization of an enjoyment or satisfaction presupposes labour; whence it follows that spoliation, far from excluding production, presupposes it and takes it for granted.

This consideration, it seems to me, ought to modify the partiality which historians, poets, and novel-writers have displayed for those heroic epochs which were not distinguished by what they sneer at under the epithet of *industrialism*. In these days, as in our own, men lived, subsisted; and labour must have done its office then as now. Only there was this difference, that nations, classes, and individuals succeeded in laying their share of the labour and toil on the shoulders of other nations, other classes, and other individuals.

The characteristic of production is to bring out of nothing, if I may so speak, the satisfactions and enjoyments which sustain and embellish life; so that a man, or a nation, may multiply *ad infinitum* these enjoyments without inflicting privation on any other man, or any other nation. So much is this the case, that a pro-

* See concluding part of chapter xi. *ante*.

found study of the economic mechanism shows us that the success of one man's labour opens up a field for the success of another's exertions.

The characteristic of spoliation, on the contrary, is this, that it cannot confer a satisfaction on one without inflicting a corresponding privation on another; for spoliation creates nothing, but displaces what labour has created. It entails an absolute loss of the exertions of both parties. So far, then, from adding to the enjoyments of mankind, it diminishes these enjoyments, and confers them, moreover, on those who have not merited them.

In order to produce, man must direct all his powers and faculties to obtain the mastery over natural laws; for it is by this means that he accomplishes his object. Hence, iron converted into a ploughshare is the emblem of production.

To steal, on the other hand, man must direct all his powers and faculties to obtain the mastery over his fellow-man; for it is by this means that he attains his end. Hence, iron converted into a sword is the emblem of spoliation.

Between the ploughshare, which brings plenty, and the sword, which brings destruction and death, there is no greater difference than between a nation of industrious workmen and a nation of spoliators. They have, and can have, nothing whatever in common. They have neither the same ideas, nor the same rules of appreciation, nor the same tastes, manners, character, laws, morals, or religion.

No more melancholy spectacle can present itself to the eye of philanthropy than to see an industrial age putting forth all its efforts, in the way of education, to get inoculated with the ideas, the sentiments, the errors, the prejudices, the vices, of an era of spoliation. Our own era is frequently accused of wanting consistency, of displaying little accordance between the judgments that are formed and the conduct that is pursued; and I believe that this arises principally from the cause which I have just pointed out.

Spoliation, in the shape of War—that is to say, pure, simple, barefaced spoliation—has its root deep in the human heart, in the organization of man, in the universal motives which actuate the social world, namely, desire of happiness and repugnance to pain, —in short, in that principle of our nature called self-interest.

I am not sorry to find myself arraigning that principle, for I have been accused of devoting to it an idolatrous worship, of representing its effects as productive only of happiness to mankind, and even of elevating it above the principle of sympathy, of disinterestedness,

and of self-sacrifice. In truth, I have not so esteemed it; I have only proved beyond the possibility of doubt its existence and its omnipotence. I should ill appreciate that omnipotence, and I should do violence to my own convictions, in representing personal interest as the universal actuating motive of the human race, did I fail now to point out the disturbing causes to which it gives rise, just as I formerly pointed out the harmonious laws of the social order which spring from it.

Man, as we have already said, has an invincible desire to support himself, to improve his condition, and to attain happiness, or what he conceives to be happiness, at least to approximate towards it. For the same reason he shuns pain and toil.

Now labour, or the exertion we make in order to cause nature to co-operate in production, is in itself toil or fatigue. For this reason, it is repugnant to man, and he does not submit to it, except for the sake of avoiding a still greater evil.

Some have maintained philosophically that labour is not an evil but a good, and they are right, if we take into account its results. It is a comparative good; or if it be an evil, it is an evil which saves us from greater evils. This is precisely the reason why men have so great a tendency to shun labour when they think that, without having recourse to it, they may be able to reap its results.

Others maintain that labour is *in itself* a good; and that, independently of its productive results, it elevates, strengthens, and purifies man's character, and is to him a source of health and enjoyment. All this is strictly true; and it is an additional evidence to us of the marvellous fertility of those final intentions which the Creator has displayed in all parts of His works. Apart altogether from the productions which are its direct results, labour promises to man, as a supplementary recompense, a sound mind in a sound body; and it is not more true that idleness is the parent of every vice than that labour is the parent of many virtues.

But this does not at all interfere with the natural and unconquerable inclinations of the human heart, or with that feeling which prompts us not to desire labour for its own sake, but to compare it constantly with its results; not to desire to expend a great effort on what can be accomplished with a smaller effort; not of two efforts to choose the more severe. Nor is our endeavour to diminish the relation which the effort bears to the result inconsistent with our desire, when we have once acquired some leisure, to

devote that leisure to new labours suited to our tastes, with the prospect of thus securing a new and additional recompense.

With reference to all this, universal facts are decisive. At all times, and everywhere, we find man regarding labour as undesirable, and satisfaction as the thing in his condition which makes him compensation for his labour. At all times, and everywhere, we find him endeavouring to lighten his toil by calling in the aid, whenever he can obtain it, of animals, of the wind, of water-power, of steam, of natural forces, or, alas! of his fellow-creature, when he succeeds in enslaving him. In this last case,—I repeat, for it is too apt to be forgotten,—labour is not diminished, but displaced.*

Man, being thus placed between two evils, want or labour, and urged on by self-interest, seeks to discover whether, by some means or other, he cannot get rid of both. It is then that spoliation presents itself to him as a solution of the problem.

He says to himself: "I have not, it is true, any means of procuring the things necessary for my subsistence and enjoyments—food, clothing, and lodging—unless these things are previously produced by labour. But it is by no means indispensable that this should be *my own* labour. It is enough that they should be produced by the labour of *some one*, provided I can get the mastery."

Such is the origin of war.

I shall not dwell upon its consequences.

When things come to this, that one man, or one nation, devotes itself to labour, and another man, or another nation, waits on till that labour is accomplished, in order to devote itself to rapine, we can see at a glance how much human power is thrown away.

On the one hand, the spoliator has not succeeded as he desired in getting quit of every kind of labour. Armed robbery exacts efforts, and sometimes very severe efforts. While the producer devotes his time to the creation of products fitted to yield satisfactions, the spoliator employs his time in devising the means of robbing him. But when the work of violence has been accomplished, or attempted, the objects calculated to yield satisfaction are neither more nor less abundant than before. They may minister to the wants of a different set of people, but not of more wants. Thus all the exertions which the spoliator has made with a view to spoliation, and the exertions also which he has failed to make with

* We forget this, when we propose the question, Is slave labour dearer or cheaper than free labour?

a view to production, are entirely lost, if not for him, at least for society.

Nor is this all. In most cases an analogous loss takes place on the side of the producer. It is not likely that he will wait for the violence with which he is menaced without taking some precaution for his own protection; and all precautions of this kind—arms, fortifications, munitions, drill—are labour, and labour lost for ever, not to him who expects security from this labour, but to mankind at large.

But should the producer, after undergoing this double labour, not esteem himself able to resist the threatened violence, it is still worse for society, and power is thrown away on a much greater scale; for, in that case, labour will be given up altogether, no one being disposed to produce in order to be plundered.

If we regard the manner in which the human faculties are affected on both sides, the moral consequences of spoliation will be seen to be no less disastrous.

Providence has designed that man should devote himself to pacific combats with natural agents, and should reap directly from nature the fruits of his victory. When he obtains this mastery over natural agents only by obtaining a mastery over his fellow-creatures, his mission is changed, and quite another direction is given to his faculties. It is seen how great the difference is between the producer and the spoliator, as regards *foresight*—foresight which becomes assimilated in some degree to *providence*, for to *foresee* is also to *provide against* [*prévoir* c'est aussi *pourvoir*].

The producer sets himself to learn the relation between cause and effect. For this purpose, he studies the laws of the physical world, and seeks to make them more and more useful auxiliaries. If he turns his regards on his fellow-men, it is to foresee their wants, and to provide for them, on condition of reciprocity.

The spoliator does not study nature. If he turns his regards on his fellow-men, it is to watch them as the eagle watches his prey, for the purpose of enfeebling and surprising them.

The same differences are observable in the other faculties, and extend to men's ideas.* . . . . . .

Spoliation by means of war is not an accidental, isolated, and transient fact; it is a fact so general and so constant as not to give place, as regards permanence, to labour itself.

Point me out any country of the world where of two races, conquerors and conquered, the one does not domineer over the other.

* See the author's brochure, *Baccalauréat et Socialisme*.—EDITOR.

Show me in Europe, in Asia, or among the islands of the sea, a favoured spot still occupied by the primitive inhabitants. If migrations of population have spared no country, war has been equally widespread.

Its traces are universal. Apart from rapine and bloodshed, public opinion outraged, and faculties and talents perverted, war has everywhere left other traces behind it, among which we must reckon slavery and aristocracy. . . . . .

Not only has the march of spoliation kept pace with the creation of wealth, but the spoliators have seized upon accumulated riches, upon capital in all its forms; and, in particular, they have fixed their regards upon capital in the shape of landed property. The last step was taking possession of man himself. For human powers and faculties being the instruments of labour, they found it a shorter method to lay hold of these powers and faculties, than to seize upon their products. . . . . .

It is impossible to calculate to what extent these great events have acted as disturbing causes, and as trammels on the natural progress of the human race. If we take into account the sacrifice of industrial power which war occasions, and the extent to which the diminished results of that power are concentrated in the hands of a limited number of conquerors, we may form to ourselves an idea of the causes of the destitution of the masses,—a destitution which in our days it is impossible to explain on the hypothesis of liberty. . . . . .

How the warlike spirit is propagated.

Aggressive nations are subject to reprisals. They often attack others; sometimes they defend themselves. When they act on the defensive, they have on their side the feeling of justice, and the sacredness of the cause in which they are engaged. They may then exult in their courage, devotion, and patriotism. But, alas! they carry these same sentiments into their offensive wars—and where is their patriotism then? . . . . . .

When two races, the one victorious and idle, the other vanquished and humiliated, occupy the same territory, everything calculated to awaken desire or arouse popular sympathies falls to the lot of the conquerors. Theirs are leisure, fêtes, taste for the arts, wealth, military parade, tournaments, grace, elegance, literature, poetry. For the conquered race nothing remains but ruined huts, squalid garments, the hard hand of labour, or the cold hand of charity. . . . . .

The consequence is that the ideas and prejudices of the dominant race, always associated with military force, come to constitute public opinion. Men, women, and children, all unite in extolling the soldier's life in preference to that of the labourer, in preferring war to industry, and spoliation to production. The vanquished race shares the same sentiments, and when, at periods of transition, it succeeds in getting the better of its oppressors, it shows itself disposed to imitate them. What is this imitation but madness? . . . . . .

How war ends.

Spoliation, like Production, having its source in the human heart, the laws of the social world would not be harmonious, even to the limited extent for which I contend, if the latter did not succeed in the long-run in overcoming the former. . . . . .

XX.

RESPONSIBILITY.

THERE is a leading idea which runs through the whole of this work, which pervades and animates every page and every line of it; and that idea is embodied in the opening words of the Christian Creed,—I BELIEVE IN GOD.

Yes, if this work differs from those of some other Economists, it is in this, that the latter appear to say, "We have but little faith in Providence, for we see that the natural laws lead to an abyss. And yet we say *laissez faire!* merely because we have still less faith in ourselves, and because we see clearly that all human efforts designed to arrest the action of these natural laws tend only to hasten the catastrophe."

Again, if this work differs from the writings of the Socialists, it is in this, that the latter say, "We pretend to believe in God, but in reality we believe only in ourselves; seeing that we have no faith in the maxim, *laissez faire*, and that we all give forth our social nostrums as infinitely superior to the plans of Providence."

For my part, I say, *laissez faire;* in other words, respect liberty, and the human initiative, ...*

* . . . . . because I believe that it is under the direction of a superior impulse, because, Providence being unable to act in the social order except through the intervention of men's interests and men's wills, it is impossible that the natural resulting force of these interests, the common tendency of these wills, should be towards ultimate evil; for then we must conclude that it is not only man, or the human race, which proceeds onward towards error; but that God himself, being powerless or malevolent, urges on to evil His abortive creation. We believe, then, in liberty, because we believe in universal harmony, because we believe in God. Proclaiming in the name of faith, and formulating in the name of science, the Divine laws of the moral movement, living and pliant as these laws are, we spurn the narrow, sinister, unbending, and unalterable institutions which the blind leaders of the ignorant would substitute for this admirable mechanism. It would be absurd in the atheist to say, *laissez faire le hasard!*—seek not to control chance, or blind destiny. But, as believers, we have a right to say, seek not to control the order and justice of

. . . . . *Responsibility, solidarity;* mysterious laws, of which, apart from Revelation, it is impossible to appreciate the cause, but the effects and infallible action of which, on the progress of society, it is given us to appreciate—laws which, for the very reason that man is sociable, are linked together and act together, although they appear sometimes to run counter to each other; and

God—seek not to control the free action of the sovereign and infallible mover of all, or of that machinery of transmission which we call the human initiative. Liberty thus understood is no longer the anarchical deification of individualism. What we adore is above and beyond man who struggles; it is God who leads him.

We acknowledge, indeed, that man may err; yes, by the whole interval which separates a truth realized and established from one which is merely guessed at or suspected. But since man's nature is to seek, his destiny is to find. Truth, be it observed, has harmonious relations, necessary affinities, not only with the constitution of the understanding and the instincts of the heart, but also with the whole physical and moral conditions of our existence; so that even when we fail to grasp it as *absolute truth*, even when it fails to recommend itself to our innate sympathies as *just*, or to our ideal aspirations as *beautiful*, it, nevertheless, at length contrives to find acceptance in its practical and unobjectionable aspect as *useful*.

Liberty, we know, may lead to evil. But evil has itself its mission. Assuredly God has not thrown it across our path as a stumbling-block. He has placed it, as it were, on each side of that path as a warning,—as a means of keeping us in the right road, or bringing us back to it.

Man's will and inclinations, like inert molecules, have their law of gravitation. But, whilst things inanimate obey blindly their pre-existent and inevitable tendencies, in the case of beings indued with free will, the force of attraction and repulsion does not precede action; it springs from the voluntary determination which it seems to be waiting for, it is developed by the very act itself, and it reacts for or against the agent, by a progressive exertion of co-operation or resistance, which we term recompense or chastisement, pleasure or pain. If the direction of the will coincides with that of the general laws, if the act is *good*, happiness is the result. If it takes an opposite direction, if it is *bad*, something opposes or repels it; error gives rise to suffering, which is its remedy and its end. Thus, Evil is constantly opposed by Evil, and Good as constantly gives rise to Good. And we venture to say that, when seen from a higher point of view, the errors of free will are limited to certain oscillations, of a determinate extent, around a superior and necessary orbit; all persistent resistance, which would force this limit, tending only to destroy itself, without at all succeeding in disturbing the order of the sphere in which it moves.

This reactive force of co-operation or repulsion, which, by means of recompense and suffering, governs the orbit, at once voluntary and necessary, of the human race, this *law of gravitation of free beings* (of which Evil is only a necessary part) is distinguished by the terms Responsibility and Solidarity; the one brings back upon the individual; the other reflects and sends back on the social body the good or bad consequences of the act; the one applies to man as a solitary and self-governing individual; the other envelops him in an inevitable community of good and evil as a partial element, a dependent member, of a collective and imperishable being—man. *Responsibility* is the sanction of individual liberty, the foundation of the *rights* of man. *Solidarity* is the evidence of his social subordination, and his principle of duty. . . .

[*A leaf of Bastiat's MS. being awanting, I hope to be pardoned for thus endeavouring to continue the idea of this religious introduction.*]—R. F.

which would require to be viewed in their *ensemble*, and in their common action, if science, with its feeble optics and uncertain steps, were not reduced to method—that melancholy crutch which constitutes its strength whilst it reveals its weakness.

Nosce te ipsum—know thyself: this, according to the oracle, is the beginning, the middle, and the end of the moral and political sciences.

As we have elsewhere remarked, in what concerns man or human society, Harmony can never mean Perfection, but only Improvement. Now improvement or perfectibility implies always, to a certain extent, imperfection in the future as well as in the past. If man could ever find his way into the promised land of *absolute Good*, he would no longer have occasion to use his understanding and his senses—he would be no longer man.

Evil exists. It is inherent in human infirmity. It manifests itself in the moral as in the material world; in the masses, as in the individual; in the whole as in the part. But because the eye may suffer and be lost, does the physiologist overlook the harmonious mechanism of that admirable organ? Does he deny the ingenious structure of the human body, because that body is subject to pain, to disease, and to death—to such extremity of suffering as caused Job in the depth of his despair, "to say to corruption, Thou art my father; and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister"? In the same way, because the social order will never bring mankind to the fancied haven of absolute good, is the economist to refuse to recognise all that is marvellous in the organization of the social order—an organization prepared with a view to the constantly-increasing diffusion of knowledge, of morality, and of happiness?

Strange! that we should deny to economic science the same right to admire the natural order of things which we concede to physiology. For, after all, what difference is there between the individual and the collective being, as regards the harmony displayed by final causes? The individual, no doubt, comes into existence, grows and is developed, educates and improves himself as life advances, until the time comes when his light and life are to be

communicated to others. At that moment everything about him is clothed in the hues of beauty; all breathes grace and joy; all is expansion, affection, benevolence, love, and harmony. For a while, his intelligence continues to be enlarged and confirmed, as if to qualify him to be the guide of those whom he has just called to tread the crooked paths of human existence. But soon his beauty fades, his grace disappears, his senses are blunted, his body becomes feeble, his memory clouded, his thoughts less bright; his affections even (except in the case of some choice spirits) get clogged with egotism, and lose that charm, that freshness, that sincerity and simplicity, that depth and disinterestedness, which distinguished his earlier days;—the poetry of life has fled. In spite of all the ingenious precautions which nature has taken to retard his dissolution—precautions which physiology sums up in the phrase *vis medicatrix*—he treads back the path of improvement, and loses, one after another, all his acquisitions by the way; he goes on from privation to privation, until he reaches that which is the greatest of all, because it includes all. The genius of optimism itself can discover nothing consolatory, nothing harmonious in this slow but unavoidable decadence—in seeing that being once so proud and so beautiful descending sadly into the tomb. . . . . The tomb! . . . . . But is not that the door of another habitation? . . . . . It is thus, when science stops short, that religion* renews, even for the individual, in another region, the concordant harmonies which have been interrupted here.†

Despite this fatal *dénoûment*, does physiology cease to see in the human body the most perfect masterpiece which ever proceeded from its Creator's hands?

But if the social body is liable to suffering, if it may suffer even to death, it is not for that reason finally condemned. Let men say what they will, it has not, in perspective, after having been elevated to its apogee, an inevitable decline. The crash of empires even is not the retrogradation of humanity, and the ancient models of

* Religion (*religare*, to bind), that which connects the present life with the future, the living with the dead, time with eternity, the finite with the infinite, man with God.

† May we not say that Divine Justice, which is so incomprehensible when we consider the lot of individuals, becomes striking when we reflect on the destinies of nations? Each man's life is a drama which is begun on one theatre and completed on another. But the same thing cannot be said of the life of nations. That instructive tragedy begins and ends upon earth. This is the reason why history becomes a holy lesson; it is the justice of Providence.—De Custine's *La Russie*.

civilisation have only been dissolved in order to make room for a civilisation still more advanced. Dynasties may be extinguished; the forms of government may be changed; yet the progress of the human race may not the less be continued. The fall of States is like the fall of leaves in autumn. It fertilizes the soil; contributes to the return of spring; and promises to future generations a richer vegetation, and more abundant harvests. Nay, even in a purely national point of view, this theory of necessary decadence is as false as it is antiquated. In the life of no people can we possibly perceive any cause of inevitable decline. The analogy which has so frequently given rise to a comparison between a nation and an individual, and led men to attribute to the one as to the other an infancy and an old age, is nothing better than a false metaphor. A community is being incessantly renewed. Let its institutions be elastic and flexible, so that in place of coming in collision with those new powers to which the human mind gives birth, they shall be so organized as to admit of this expansion of intellectual energy and accommodate themselves to it; and we see no reason why such institutions should not flourish in eternal youth. But whatever may be thought of the fragility and fall of empires, it must never be forgotten that society, which in its aggregate represents the human race, is constituted upon more solid bases. The more we study it, the more we shall be convinced that it too, like the human body, is provided with a *curative force*, a *vis medicatrix*, which delivers it from the evils which afflict it; and that it carries in its bosom, moreover, a *progressive force;* and is by the latter urged on to improvements to which we can assign no limits.

If individual evil, then, does not weaken or invalidate physiological harmony, still less does collective evil weaken or invalidate social harmony.

But how are we to reconcile the existence of evil with the infinite goodness of God? I cannot explain what I do not understand.

All I shall say is, that this solution can no more be exacted from Political Economy than from Anatomy. These sciences, which are alike sciences of observation, study man as he is, without asking the Creator to reveal His impenetrable secrets.

Thus, I again repeat, harmony does not correspond with the idea of absolute perfection, but with that of indefinite improvement. It has pleased God to attach suffering to our nature, seeing that He has designed that in us feebleness should be anterior to force, ignorance to science, want to satisfaction, effort to result, acquisi-

tion to possession, destitution to wealth, error to truth, experience to foresight. I submit without murmuring to this ordinance, being able, moreover, to imagine no other combination. But if, by a mechanism as simple as it is ingenious, He has provided *that all men should approximate to a common level, which is continually rising*, if He assures them—by the very action of what we denominate evil—both of the duration and the diffusion of progress, then am I not only content to bow myself under His bountiful and almighty hand,—I bless that hand, I worship it, I adore it.

We have seen certain schools arise which have taken advantage of the insolubility (humanly speaking) of this question to embroil all others, as if it were given to our finite intelligence to comprehend and reconcile things which are infinite. Placing over the portal of social science this sentence, *God cannot desire evil*, they arrive at the following series of conclusions: "Evil exists in society; then society is not organized according to the designs of God. Let us change, and change again, and change continually this organization. Let us try about, and make experiments, until we have effaced all trace of suffering from the world. By that sign we shall know that the kingdom of God has come."

Nor is this all. These schools have been led to exclude from their social plans liberty as well as suffering, for liberty implies the possibility of error, and consequently the possibility of evil. Addressing their fellow-men, they say, "Allow us to organize you—don't you interfere—cease to compare, to judge, to decide anything by yourselves and for yourselves. We abhor the *laissez faire;* but we ask you to let things alone, and to let us alone. If we succeed in conducting you to perfect happiness, the infinite goodness of God will be vindicated."

Contradiction, inconsistency, presumption,—we ask which is most apparent in such language?

One sect among others, not very philosophical, but very noisy, promises to mankind unmixed felicity. Only deliver over to that sect the government of the human race, and in virtue of certain formulas, it makes bold to rid men of every painful sensation.

But if you do not accord a blind faith to the promises of that

sect, then, bringing forward that formidable and insoluble problem which has vexed philosophy since the beginning of the world, they summon you to reconcile the existence of evil with the infinite goodness of God. Do you hesitate? they accuse you of impiety.

Fourier rings the changes on this theme till he exhausts all its combinations.

"*Either God has not been able* to give us a social code of attraction, of justice, of truth, and of unity; in which case He has been unjust in giving us wants without the means of satisfying them:"

"*Or He has not desired to give it us;* and in that case He has deliberately persecuted us by creating designedly wants which it is impossible to satisfy:"

"*Or He is able, and has not desired;* in which case the principle of good would rival the principle of evil, having the power to establish good, and preferring to establish evil:"

"*Or He has desired, and has not been able;* in which case He is incapable of governing us, acknowledging and desiring good, but not having the power to establish it:"

"*Or He has been neither able nor willing;* in which case the principle of good is below the principle of evil, etc.:"

"*Or He has been both able and willing;* in which case the code exists, and it is for us to promulgate it, etc."

And Fourier is the prophet of this new revelation. Let us deliver ourselves up to him and to his disciples: Providence will then be justified, sensibility will change its nature, and suffering will disappear from the earth.

But how, I would ask, do these apostles of absolute good, these hardy logicians, who exclaim continually that "God being perfect, His work must be perfect also;" and who accuse us of impiety because we resign ourselves to human imperfection,—how, I say, do these men not perceive that, on the most favourable hypothesis, they are as impious as we are? I should like, indeed, that, under the reign of Messieurs Considérant, Hennequin, etc., no one in the world should ever lose his mother, or suffer from the toothache,—in which case he also might chant the litany, *Either God has not been able or has not been willing;*—I should like much that evil were to take flight to the infernal regions, retreating before the broad daylight of the Socialist revelation—that one of their plans, *phalanstère, crédit gratuit, anarchie, triade, atelier social,** and so

* Allusion to Socialist Utopias of the day.—TRANSLATOR.

forth, had the power to rid us of all future evils. But would it annihilate suffering in the past? The infinite, observe, has no limits; and if there has existed on the earth since the beginning of the world a single sufferer, that is enough to render the problem of the infinite goodness of God insoluble in their point of view.

Let us beware, then, of linking the science of the finite to the mysteries of the infinite. Let us apply to the one reason and observation, and leave the other in the domain of revelation and of faith.

In all respects, and in every aspect, man is imperfect. In this world, at least, he encounters limits in all directions, and touches the finite at every point. His force, his intelligence, his affections, his life, have in them nothing absolute, and belong to a material mechanism which is subject to fatigue, to decay, and to death.

Not only is this so, but our imperfection is so great that we cannot even imagine perfection as existing either in ourselves or in the external world. Our minds are so much out of proportion to this idea of perfection that all our efforts to seize it are vain. The oftener we try to grasp it, the oftener it escapes us, and is lost in inextricable contradictions. Show me a perfect man, and you will show me a man who is exempt from suffering, and who has consequently neither wants, nor desires, nor sensations, nor sensibility, nor nerves, nor muscles; who can be ignorant of nothing, and consequently has neither the faculty of attention, nor judgment, nor reasoning, nor memory, nor imagination, nor brains; in short, you will show me a being who does not exist.

Thus, in whatever aspect we regard man, we must regard him as being subject to suffering. We must admit that evil has entered as one spring of action into the providential plan; and in place of seeking by chimerical means to annihilate it, our business is to study the part which it has to play, and the mission on which it is sent.

When it pleased God to create a being made up of wants, and of faculties to supply these wants, it was at the same time decreed that this being should be subject to suffering; for, apart from suffering, we could form no idea of wants, and, apart from wants, we could form no idea of utility, or of the use and object of any of our faculties. All that constitutes our greatness has its root in what constitutes our weakness.

Urged on by innumerable impulses, and indued with an intelli-

gence which enlightens our exertions, and enables us to appreciate their results, we have *free will* to guide and direct us.

But free will implies error as possible, and error in its turn implies suffering as its inevitable effect. I defy any one to tell me what it is to *choose freely*, if it be not to run the risk of making a bad choice, and what it is to make a bad choice if it be not to prepare the way for suffering.

And this is, no doubt, the reason why those schools who are content with nothing less than absolute good are all materialist and fatalist. They are unable to admit free will. They see that liberty of acting proceeds from liberty of choosing; that liberty of choosing supposes the possibility of error; and that the possibility of error is the possibility of evil. Now, in an artificial society, such as our *organisateurs* invent, evil cannot make its appearance. For that reason, men must be exempted from the possibility of error; and the surest means to accomplish that is to deprive them of the faculty of acting and choosing—in other words, of free will. It has been truly said that Socialism is despotism incarnate.

In presence of these fooleries, it may be asked, By what right does the organizer of artificial systems venture to think, act, and choose, not only for himself, but for every one else? for, after all, he belongs to the human race, and in that respect is fallible; and he is so much the more fallible in proportion as he pretends to extend the range of his science and his will.

No doubt the *organisateur* finds this objection radically unfounded, inasmuch as it confounds him with the rest of mankind. But he who professes to discover the defects of the Divine workmanship, and has undertaken to recast it, is more than a man; he is an oracle, and more than an oracle. . . . .

Socialism has two elements: the frenzy of contradiction, and the madness of pride!

But when free will, which is the foundation of the whole argument, is denied, is not this the proper place to demonstrate its existence? I shall take good care not to enter upon any such demonstration. Every one feels that his will is free, and that is enough. I feel this, not vaguely, but a hundred times more intensely than if it had been demonstrated to me by Aristotle or by Euclid. I feel it with conscious joy when I have made a choice which does me honour; with remorse, when I have made a choice which degrades me. I find, moreover, that all men by their

conduct affirm their belief in free will, although some deny it in their writings.* All men compare motives, deliberate, determine, retract, try to foresee; all give advice, are indignant at injustice, admire acts of devotion. Then all acknowledge in themselves and in others the existence of free will, without which, choice, advice, foresight, morality, virtue, are impossible. Let us take care how we seek to demonstrate what is admitted by universal practice. Absolute fatalists are no more to be found, even at Constantinople, than absolute sceptics are to be met with at Alexandria. Those who proclaim themselves such may be fools enough to try to persuade others, but they are powerless to convince themselves. They prove with much subtlety that they have no will of their own; but when we see that they act as if they had it, we need not dispute with them.

Here, then, we are placed in the midst of nature and of our fellow-men—urged on by impulses, wants, appetites, desires—provided with various faculties enabling us to operate on man and on things—determined to action by our free will—indued with intelligence, which is perfectible and therefore imperfect, and which, if it enlightens us, may also deceive us with reference to the consequences of our actions.

Every human action—giving rise to a series of good or bad consequences, of which some fall back on the agent, and others affect his family, his neighbours, his fellow-citizens, and sometimes mankind at large—every such action causes the vibration of two chords, the sounds of which are oracular utterances—Responsibility and Solidarity.

As regards the man who acts, Responsibility is the natural link which exists between the act and its consequences. It is a complete system of *inevitable* Rewards and Punishments which no man has invented, which acts with all the regularity of the great natural laws, and which may, consequently, be regarded as of Divine institution. The evident object of Responsibility is to restrain the

* "As to the doctrine of necessity, no one believes it. If a man should give me arguments that I do not see, though I could not answer them, should I believe that I do not see? . . . . All theory is against the freedom of the will; all experience for it. . . . . I *know* that I am free, and there's an end on't."—*Dr Johnson.*—TRANSLATOR.

number of hurtful actions, and increase the number of such as are useful.

This mechanism, which is at once corrective and progressive, remunerative and retributive, is so simple, so near us, so identified with our whole being, so perpetually in action, that not only can we not ignore it, but we see that, like Evil, it is one of those phenomena without which our whole life would be to us unintelligible.

The book of Genesis tells us that, the first man having been driven from the terrestrial paradise, because he had learned to distinguish between good and evil, *sciens bonum et malum*, God pronounced this sentence on him: *In laboribus comedes ex terrâ cunctis diebus vitæ tuæ. Spinas et tribulos germinabit tibi. In sudore vultûs tui vesceris pane, donec revertaris in terram de quâ sumptus es: quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris.**

Here, then, we have good and evil—or human nature. Here we have acts and habits producing good or bad consequences—or human nature. Here we have labour, sweat, thorns, tribulation, and death—or human nature.

Human nature, I say; for to choose, to be mistaken, to suffer, to rectify our errors—in a word, all the elements which make up the idea of Responsibility—are so inherent in our sensitive, rational, and free nature, they are so much of the essence of that nature itself, that I defy the most fertile imagination to conceive for man another mode of existence.

That man might have lived in an Eden, *in paradiso voluptatis*, ignorant of good and evil, we can indeed believe, but we cannot comprehend it, so profoundly has our nature been transformed.

We find it impossible to separate the idea of *life* from that of sensibility; that of sensibility from that of *pleasure* and *pain*; that of pleasure and pain from that of *reward* and *punishment*; that of *intelligence* from that of *liberty* and *choice*, and all these ideas from the idea of Responsibility; for it is the aggregate of all these ideas which gives us the idea of Being or Existence, so that when we think upon God, our reason, which tells us that He is incapable of suffering, remains confounded—so inseparable are our notions of sensibility and *existence*.

* "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee. . . . In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, until thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."—*Gen.* iii. 17, 18, 19.

It is this undoubtedly which renders *Faith* the necessary complement of our destinies. It is the only bond which is possible between the creature and the Creator, seeing that God is, and always will be, to our reason, incomprehensible, *Deus absconditus.*

In order to be convinced how hard Responsibility presses us, and shuts us in on every side, we have only to attend to the most simple facts.

Fire burns us; the collision of bodies bruises us. If we were not indued with sensibility, or if our sensibility were not painfully affected by the approach of fire, and by rude contact with other bodies, we should be exposed to death every moment.

From earliest infancy to extreme old age, our life is only a long apprenticeship. By frequently falling, we learn to walk. By rude and reiterated experiments, we are taught to avoid heat, cold, hunger, thirst, excess. Do not let us complain of the roughness of this experience. If it were not so, it would teach us nothing.

The same thing holds in the social order. From the unhappy consequences of cruelty, of injustice, of fear, of violence, of deceit, of idleness, we learn to be gentle, just, brave, moderate, truthful, and industrious. Experience is protracted; it will never come to an end; but it will never cease to be efficacious.

Man being so constituted, it is impossible that we should not recognise in responsibility the mainspring to which social progress is specially confided. It is the crucible in which experience is elaborated. They, then, who believe in the superiority of times past, like those who despair of the future, fall into the most manifest contradiction. Without being aware of it, they extol error, and calumniate knowledge. It is as if they said, "The more I have learnt, the less I know. The more clearly I discern what is hurtful, the more I shall be exposed to it." Were humanity constituted on such a basis as this, it would in a short time cease to exist.

Man's starting-point is ignorance and inexperience. The farther we trace back the chain of time, the more destitute we find men of that knowledge which is fitted to direct their choice,—of knowledge which can be acquired only in one of two ways; by reflection or by experience.

Now it so happens that man's every action includes, not one consequence only, but a series of consequences. Sometimes the first is good, and the others bad; sometimes the first is bad, and the others good. From one of our determinations there may pro-

ceed good and bad consequences, combined in variable proportions. We may venture to term *vicious* those actions which produce more bad than good effects, and *virtuous* those which produce a greater amount of good than of evil.

When one of our actions produces a first consequence which we approve, followed by many other consequences which are hurtful, so that the aggregate of bad predominates over the aggregate of good, such an action tends to limit and restrain itself, and to be abandoned in proportion as we acquire more foresight.

Men naturally perceive the immediate consequences of their actions before they perceive those consequences which are more remote. Whence it follows that what we have denominated vicious acts are more multiplied in times of ignorance. Now the repetition of the same acts constitutes habit. Ages of ignorance, then, are ages of bad habits.

Consequently, they are ages of bad laws, for acts which are repeated, habits which are general, constitute manners, upon which laws are modelled, and of which, so to speak, they are the official expression.

How is this ignorance to be put an end to? How can men be taught to know the second, the third, and all the subsequent consequences of their acts and their habits?

The first means is the exercise of that faculty of discerning and reasoning which Providence has vouchsafed them.

But there is another still more sure and efficacious,—experience. When the act is once done, the consequences follow inevitably. The first effect is good; for it is precisely to obtain that result that the act is done. But the second may inflict suffering, the third still greater suffering, and so on.

Then men's eyes are opened, and light begins to appear. That action is not repeated; we sacrifice the good produced by the first and immediate consequence, for fear of the still greater evil which the subsequent consequences entail. If the act has become a habit, and if we have not power to give it up, we at least give way to it with hesitation and repugnance, and after an inward conflict. We do not recommend it; on the contrary, we blame it, and persuade our children against it; and we are certainly on the road of progress.

If, on the other hand, the act is one which is useful, but from which we refrain, because its first, and only known, consequence is painful, and we are ignorant of the favourable ulterior consequences, experience teaches us the effects of abstaining from it. A

savage, for instance, has had enough to eat. He does not foresee that he will be hungry to-morrow. Why should he labour to-day? To work is present pain—no need of foresight to know that. He therefore continues idle. But the day passes, another succeeds, and as it brings hunger, he must then work under the spur of necessity. This is a lesson which, frequently repeated, cannot fail to develop foresight. By degrees idleness is regarded in its true light. We brand it; we warn the young against it. Public opinion is now on the side of industry.

But in order that experience should afford us this lesson, in order that it should fulfil its mission, develop foresight, explain the series of consequences which flow from our actions, pave the way to good habits, and restrain bad ones—in a word, in order that experience should become an effective instrument of progress and moral improvement—the law of Responsibility must come into operation. The bad consequences must make themselves felt, and *evil* must for the moment chastise us.

Undoubtedly it would be better that evil had no existence; and it might perhaps be so if man was constituted differently from what he is. But taking man as he is, with his wants, his desires, his sensibility, his free will, his power of choosing and erring, his faculty of bringing into play a cause which necessarily entails consequences which it is not in our power to elude as long as the cause exists; in such circumstances, the only way of removing the cause is to enlighten the will, rectify the choice, abandon the vicious act or the vicious habit; and nothing can effect this but the law of Responsibility.

We may affirm, then, that man being constituted as he is, evil is not only necessary but useful. It has a mission, and enters into the universal harmony. Its mission is to destroy its own cause, to limit its own operation, to concur in the realization of good, and to stimulate progress.

We may elucidate this by some examples which the subject which now engages us—Political Economy—presents.

Frugality. Prodigality.
Monopolies.
*Population.** . . . .

* The interesting developments which the author intended to present here by way of illustrations, and of which he indicated beforehand the character, he unfortunately did not live to write. The reader may supply the want by referring to chapter xvi. of this work, and likewise to chapters vii. and xi. of Bastiat's pamphlet, *Ce qu'on voit et Ce qu'on ne voit pas.*—NOTE OF THE EDITOR.

Responsibility guards itself by three sanctions:—

1*st*, *The natural sanction;* which is that of which I have just been speaking—the necessary suffering or recompense which certain acts and habits entail.

2*d*, *The religious sanction;* or the punishments and rewards of another life, which are annexed to acts and habits, according as they are vicious or virtuous.

3*d*, *The legal sanction;* or the punishments and rewards decreed beforehand by society.

Of these three sanctions, I confess that the one which appears to me fundamental is the first. In saying this I cannot fail to run counter to sentiments which I respect; but I must be permitted to declare my opinion.

Is an act vicious because a revelation from above has declared it to be so? Or has revelation declared it vicious because it produces consequences which are bad? These questions will probably always form a subject of controversy between the philosophical and the religious mind.

I believe that Christianity can range itself on the side of those who answer the last of these two questions in the affirmative. Christianity itself tells us that it has not come to oppose the natural law, but to confirm it.* We can scarcely admit that God, who is the supreme principle of order, should have made an arbitrary classification of human actions, that He should have denounced punishment on some, and promised reward to others, and this without any regard to the effects of these actions, that is to say, to their discordance, or concordance, in the universal harmony.

When He said, "Thou shalt not kill—thou shalt not steal," no doubt He had in view to prohibit certain acts because they were hurtful to man and to society, which are His work.

Regard to consequences is so powerful a consideration with man

* "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another."—*Romans* ii. 14, 15. See also *Bishop Butler's 3d Sermon, on Human Nature:* "Nothing," says he, "can be more evident than that, *exclusive of revelation*, man cannot be considered as a creature left by his Maker to act at random, and live at large up to the extent of his natural power, as passion, humour, wilfulness, happen to carry him; which is the condition brute creatures are in. But that, *from his make, constitution, or nature, he is in the strictest and most proper sense a law to himself.* He hath the rule of right within. What is wanting is only that he honestly attend to it." — BUTLER'S *Works*, vol. ii. p. 65.—TRANSLATOR.

that if he belonged to a religion that forbade acts which universal experience proved to be useful, or that sanctioned the observance of habits palpably hurtful, I believe that such a religion could not be maintained, but that it would at length give way before the progress of knowledge. Men could not long suppose that the deliberate design of God was to cause evil and to interdict good.

The question which I broach here has perhaps no very important bearing on Christianity, since it ordains only what is good in itself, and forbids only what is bad.

But the question I am now examining is this, whether in principle the religious sanction goes to confirm the natural sanction, or whether the natural sanction goes for nothing in presence of the religious sanction, and should give way to the latter when they come into collision.

Now, if I am not mistaken, the tendency of ministers of religion is to pay little attention to the natural sanction. For this they have an unanswerable reason: "God has ordained this; God has forbidden that." There is no longer any room left for reasoning, for God is infallible and omnipotent. Although the act should lead to the destruction of the world, we must march on like blind men, just as we would do if God addressed us personally, and showed us heaven and hell.

It may happen, even in the true religion, that actions in themselves innocent are forbidden by Divine authority. To exact interest for money, for example, has been pronounced sinful. Had mankind given obedience to that prohibition, the race would long since have disappeared from the face of the earth. For without interest the accumulation of capital is impossible; without capital there can be no co-operation of anterior and present labour; without this co-operation there can be no society; and without society man cannot exist.

On the other hand, on examining the subject of interest more nearly, we are convinced that not only is it useful in its general effects, but that there is in it nothing contrary to charity and truth—certainly not more than there is in the stipend of a minister of religion, and less than in certain perquisites belonging to his office.

Thus, all the power of the Church has not been able for an instant to supersede, in this respect, the nature of things. The most which has been accomplished is to cause to be disguised one

of the forms, and that the least usual form, of exacting interest, in a number of very trifling transactions.

In the same way, as regards precepts; when the Gospel says, "Unto him who smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other," it gives a precept which, if taken literally, would destroy the right of legitimate defence in the individual, and consequently in society. Now, without this right, the existence of the human race is impossible.

And what has happened? For eighteen hundred years this saying has been repeated as a mere conventionalism.

But there is a still graver consideration. There are false religions in the world. These necessarily admit precepts and prohibitions which are in antagonism with the natural sanctions attached to certain acts. Now, of all the means which have been given us to distinguish in a matter so important, the true from the false, that which emanates from God from that which proceeds from imposture, none is more certain, more decisive, than an examination of the good or bad consequences which a doctrine is calculated to have on the advancement and progress of mankind—*a fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos.*

Legal sanction.—Nature having prepared a system of punishments and rewards, in the shape of the effects which necessarily proceed from each act and from each habit, what is the province of human law? There are only three courses it can take—to allow Responsibility to act, to chime in with it, or to oppose it.

It seems to me beyond doubt that when a legal sanction is brought into play, it ought only to be to give more force, regularity, certainty, and efficacy to the natural sanction. These two powers should co-operate, and not run counter to each other.

For example, if fraud is in the first instance profitable to him who has recourse to it, in the long-run it is more frequently fatal to him; for it injures his credit, his honour, and his reputation. It creates around him distrust and suspicion. It is, besides, always hurtful to the man who is the victim of it. Finally, it alarms society, and obliges it to employ part of its force in expensive precautions. The sum of evil, then, far exceeds the sum of good. This is what constitutes natural Responsibility, which acts constantly as a preventive and repressive check. We can understand, however, that the community does not choose to depend altogether on the slow action of necessary responsibility, and judges it fit to add a legal sanction to the natural sanction. In

that case, we may say that the legal sanction is only the natural sanction organized and reduced to rule. It renders punishment more immediate and more certain; it gives more publicity and authenticity to facts; it surrounds the suspected party with guarantees, and affords him a regular opportunity to exculpate himself if there be room for it; it rectifies the errors of public opinion, and calms down individual vengeance by substituting for it public retribution. In fine—and this perhaps is the essential thing—it does not destroy the lessons of experience.

We cannot, then, say that the legal sanction is illogical in principle, when it advances alongside the natural sanction and concurs in the same result. It does not follow, however, that the legal sanction ought in every case to be substituted for the natural sanction, and that human law is justified by the consideration alone that it acts in the sense of Responsibility.

The artificial distribution of punishments and rewards includes in itself, and at the expense of the community, an amount of inconvenience which it is necessary to take into account. The machinery of the legal sanction comes from men, is worked by men, and is costly.

Before submitting an action or a habit to organized repression, there is always this question to be asked:—

Does the excess of good which is obtained by the addition of legal repression to natural repression compensate the evil which is inherent in the repressive machinery?

In other words, is the evil of artificial repression greater or less than the evil of impunity?

In the case of theft, of murder, of the greater part of crimes and delicts, the question admits of no doubt. Every nation of the earth represses these crimes by public force.

But when we have to do with a habit which it is difficult to account for, and which may spring from moral causes of delicate appreciation, the question is different, and it may very well be that although this habit is universally esteemed hurtful and vicious, the law should remain neuter, and hand it over to natural responsibility.

In the first place, this is the course which the law ought to take in the case of an action or a habit which is doubtful, which one part of the population thinks good and another part bad. You think me wrong in following the Catholic ritual; I think you

wrong in adopting the Lutheran faith. Let God judge of that. Why should I aim a blow at you, or why should you aim a blow at me? If it is not right that we should strike at each other, how can it be right that we should delegate a third party, the depositary of the public force, to chastise one of us for the satisfaction of the other?

You allege that I am wrong in teaching my child the moral and natural sciences; I believe that you are wrong in teaching your child Greek and Latin exclusively. Let us act on both sides according to our feeling of what is right. Let our families be acted on by the law of Responsibility. That law will punish the one who is wrong. Do not invoke human law, which may punish the one who is right.

You assert that I would do better to pursue such or such a career, to work according to your process, to employ an iron in place of a wooden plough, to sow thin in place of sowing thick, to purchase in the East rather than in the West. I maintain just the contrary. I have made all my calculations; and surely I am more interested than you in not falling into any mistake in matters upon the right ordering of which my welfare, my existence, and the happiness of my family depend, while in your case they interest only your *amour-propre* and the credit of your systems. Give me as much advice as you please, but constrain me to nothing. I decide upon *my own proper risk and peril*, and surely that is enough without the tyrannical intervention of law.

We see that, in almost all the important actions of life, it is necessary to respect free will, to rely on the individual judgment of men, on that inward light which God has given them for their guidance, and after that to leave Responsibility to do its own work.

The intervention of law in analogous cases, over and above the very great inconvenience of opening the way equally to error and to truth, has the still greater inconvenience of paralyzing intelligence itself, of extinguishing that light which is the inheritance of humanity and the pledge of progress.

But even when an action, a habit, a practice is acknowledged by public good sense to be bad, vicious, and immoral, when it is so beyond doubt; when those who give themselves up to it are the first to blame themselves,—that is not enough to justify the intervention of law. As I have already said, it is necessary also to know if, in adding to the bad consequences of this vice the bad consequences inherent in all legal repression, we do not produce,

in the long-run, a sum of evil which exceeds the good which the legal sanction adds to the natural sanction.

We might examine, for instance, the evils which would result from the application of the legal sanction to the repression of idleness, prodigality, avarice, egotism, cupidity, ambition.

Let us take the case of idleness.

This is a very natural inclination, and there are not wanting men who join the chorus of the Italians when they celebrate the *dolce far niente*, and of Rousseau, when he says, *Je suis paresseux avec délices*. We cannot doubt, then, that idleness is attended with a certain amount of enjoyment. Were it not so, in fact, there would be no idleness in the world.

And yet there flows from this inclination a host of evils, so much so that the wisdom of nations has embodied itself in the proverb that *Idleness is the parent of every vice.*

The evils of idleness infinitely surpass the good; and it is necessary that the law of Responsibility should act in this matter with some energy, either as a lesson or as a spur, seeing that it is in fact by labour that the world has reached the state of civilization which it has now attained.

Now, considered either as a lesson or as a spur to action, what would a legal sanction add to the providential sanction? Suppose we had a law to punish idleness. In what precise degree would such a law quicken the national activity?

If we could find this out, we should have an exact measure of the benefit resulting from the law. I confess I can form no idea of this part of the problem. But we must ask, at what price would this benefit, whatever it were, be purchased; and surely little reflection is needed in order to see that the certain inconveniences of legal repression would far exceed its problematical advantages.

In the first place, there are in France thirty-six millions of inhabitants. It would be necessary to exercise over them all a rigorous *surveillance*, to follow them into their fields, their workshops, to their domestic circles. Think of the number of functionaries, the increase of taxes, etc., which would be the result.

Then, those who are now industrious—and the number, thank God, is great—would be, no less than the idle, subjected to this intolerable inquisition. It is surely an immense inconvenience to subject a hundred innocent people to degrading measures, in

order to punish one guilty person whom nature has herself taken it in hand to chastise.

And then, when does idleness begin? In the case of each man brought to justice, the most minute and delicate inquiries would be necessary. Was the accused really idle, or did he merely take necessary repose? Was he sick, or was he meditating, or was he saying his prayers, etc.? How could we appreciate all those shades of difference? Did he work harder and longer in the morning in order to have a little more time at his disposal in the evening? How many witnesses, judges, juries, policemen, would be needed, how much resistance, espionage, and hatred would be engendered! . . . . .

Next we should have the chapter of judicial blunders. How great an amount of idleness would escape! and, in return, how many industrious people would go to redeem in prison the inactivity of a day by the inactivity of a month!

With these consequences and many others before our eyes, we say, Let natural Responsibility do its own work. And we do well in saying so.

The Socialists, who never decline to have recourse to despotism in order to accomplish their ends—for the end is everything with them—have branded Responsibility under the name of *individualism*,—and have then tried to annihilate it, and absorb it in the sphere of action of a *solidarity* extended beyond all natural bounds.

The consequences of this perversion of the two great springs of human perfectibility are fatal. There is no longer any dignity, any liberty, for man. For, from the moment that the man who acts is not personally answerable for the good or bad consequences of his actions, his right to act singly and individually no longer exists. If each movement of the individual is to reflect back the series of its effects on society at large, the initiative of each such movement can no longer be left to the individual—it belongs to society. The community alone must decide all, and regulate all,—education, food, wages, amusements, locomotion, affections, families, etc. Now, the law is the voice of society; the law is the legislator. Here, then, we have a flock and a shepherd,—less than that even, inert matter, and a workman. We see, then, to what point the suppression of Responsibility and of individualism would lead us.

To conceal this frightful design from the eyes of the vulgar, it was necessary to flatter their selfish passions by declaiming against

egotism. To the suffering classes Socialism says, "Do not trouble yourselves to examine whether your sufferings are to be ascribed to the law of Responsibility. There are fortunate people in the world, and in virtue of the law of Solidarity they ought to share their prosperity with you." And for the purpose of paving the way to the degrading level of a factitious, official, legal, constrained, and unnatural Solidarity, they erect spoliation into a system, they twist all our notions of justice, and they exalt that individualist sentiment, which they were thought to have proscribed, up to the highest point of power and perversity. Their whole system is thus of a piece,—negation of the harmonies which spring from liberty in the principle,—despotism and slavery in the result,—immorality in the means.

Every effort to divert the natural course of responsibility is a blow aimed at justice, at liberty, at order, at civilisation, and at progress.

At justice. An act or a habit being assumed to exist, its good or bad consequences must follow necessarily. Were it possible, indeed, to suppress these consequences, there would doubtless be some advantage in suspending the action of the natural law of responsibility. But the only result to which a written law could lead would be that the good effects of a bad action would be reaped by the author of that action, and that its bad effects would fall back on a third party, or upon the community; which has certainly the special aspect of injustice.

Thus, modern societies are constituted on the principle that the father of a family should rear and educate his children. And it is this principle which restrains within just limits the increase and distribution of population; each man acting under a sense of responsibility. Men are not all indued with the same amount of foresight; and* in large towns improvidence is allied with immorality. We have nowadays a regular budget, and an administration, for the purpose of collecting children abandoned by their parents; no inquiry discourages this shameful desertion, and a

* The conclusion of this chapter is little more than a series of notes thrown together, without transitions or developments.—EDITOR.

constantly-increasing number of destitute children inundates our poorer districts.

Here, then, we have a peasant who marries late in life, in order not to be overburdened with a family, obliged to bring up the children of others. He will not inculcate foresight on his son. Another lives in continence, and we see him taxed to bring up a set of bastards. In a religious point of view, his conscience is tranquil, but in a human point of view he must call himself a fool. . . . . .

We do not pretend here to enter on the grave question of public charity, we wish only to make this essential observation, that the more a State is centralized, the more that it turns natural responsibility into factitious solidarity, the more it takes away from consequences (which thenceforth affect those who have no connexion with their cause) their providential character of justice, chastisement, and preventive restraint.

When Government cannot avoid charging itself with a service which ought to remain within the domain of private activity, it ought at least to allow the responsibility to rest as nearly as possible where it would naturally fall. Thus, in the question of foundling hospitals, the principle being that the father and mother should bring up the child, the law should exhaust every means of endeavouring to enforce this. Failing the parents, this burden should fall on the commune; and failing the commune, on the department. Do you desire to multiply foundlings *ad infinitum?* Declare that the State will take charge of them. It would be still worse if France should undertake to maintain the children of the Chinese, and *vice versa*. . . . . .

It is, in truth, a singular thing that we should be always endeavouring to make laws to check the evils of responsibility! Will it never be understood that we do not annihilate these evils—we only turn them into a new channel? The result is one injustice the more, and one lesson the less. . . . . .

How is the world to be improved if it be not by every man learning to discharge his duty better? And will each man not discharge his duties better in proportion as he has more to suffer by neglecting or violating them? If social action is to be mixed up in the work of responsibility, it ought to be in order to second it, not to thwart it, to concentrate its effects, not to abandon them to chance.

It has been said that opinion is the mistress of the world. As-

suredly, in order that opinion should have its proper sway it is necessary that it should be enlightened; and opinion is so much more enlightened in proportion as each man who contributes to form it perceives more clearly the connexion of causes and effects. Now nothing leads us to perceive this connexion better than experience, and experience, as we know, is personal, and the fruit of responsibility.

In the natural play, then, of this great law of responsibility we have a system of valuable teaching with which it is very imprudent to tamper.

If, by ill-considered combinations, you relieve men from responsibility for their actions, they may still be taught by theory—but no longer by experience. And I doubt if instruction which has never been sanctioned and confirmed by experience is not more dangerous than ignorance itself. . . . . .

The *sense of responsibility* is eminently capable of improvement.

This is one of the most beautiful moral phenomena. There is nothing which we admire more in a man, in a class, in a nation, than the feeling of responsibility. It indicates superior moral culture, and an exquisite sensibility to the awards of public opinion. It may be, however, that the sense of responsibility is highly developed in one thing and very little in another. In France, among the educated classes, one would die of shame to be caught cheating at play or addicting oneself to solitary drinking. These things are laughed at among the peasants. But to traffic in political rights, to make merchandise of his vote, to be guilty of inconsistency, to cry out by turns *Vive le Roi! Vive la Ligue!* as the interest of the moment may prompt, these are things which our manners do not brand with shame.

The development of the sense of responsibility may be much aided by female intervention. . . . . .

Females are themselves extremely sensible of the feeling of responsibility. . . . . It rests with them to create this *force moralisatrice* among the other sex; for it is their province to distribute praise and blame effectively. Why, then, do they not do so? because they are not sufficiently acquainted with the connexion between causes and effects in the moral world. . . . . .

The science of morals is the science of all, but especially of the female sex, for they form the manners of a nation. . . . . .

XXI.

SOLIDARITY.

If man were perfect, if he were infallible, society would present a very different harmony from that which is the subject of our inquiries. Ours is not the society of Fourier. It does not exclude evil; it admits dissonances; only we assert that it does not cease to be harmony if these dissonances pave the way to concord, and bring us back to it.

Our point of departure is that man is fallible, and that God has given him free will; and with the faculty of choosing, that of erring, of mistaking what is false for what is true, of sacrificing the future to the present, of giving way to unreasonable desires, etc. . . . .

Man errs. But every act, every habit has its consequences.

By means of Responsibility, as we have seen, these consequences fall back on the author of the act. A natural concatenation of rewards or punishments, then, attracts him towards good, or repels him from evil.

Had man been destined to a solitary life, and to solitary labour, Responsibility would have been his only law.

But he is differently placed; he is sociable *by destination.* It is not true, as Rousseau has said, that man is naturally a *perfect and solitary whole,* and that the will of the lawgiver has transformed him into a fraction of a greater *whole.* The family, the province, the nation, the human race, are aggregates with which man has *necessary* relations. Hence it follows that the actions and the habits of the individual produce, besides the consequences which fall back upon himself, other good or bad consequences which extend themselves to his fellow-men. This is what we term the law of *Solidarity,* which is a sort of *collective Responsibility.*

This idea of Rousseau that the legislator has invented society—an idea false in itself—has been injurious in this respect, that it has led men to think that Solidarity is of legislative creation, and we

shall immediately see that modern legislators have based upon this doctrine their efforts to subject society to an *artificial solidarity*, acting in an inverse sense to *natural solidarity*. In everything, the principle of these great manipulators of the human race is to set up their own work in room of the work of God, which they disown.

Our first task is to prove undeniably the natural existence of the law of *Solidarity*.

In the eighteenth century, they did not believe in it. They adhered to the doctrine of the personality of faults. The philosophers of the last century, engaged above all in the reaction against Catholicism, would have feared, by admitting the principle of Solidarity, to open a door to the doctrine of *original sin*. Every time Voltaire found in the Scriptures a man bearing the punishment of another, he said ironically, "This is frightful, but the justice of God is not that of man."

We are not concerned here to discuss *original sin*. But what Voltaire laughed at is nevertheless a fact, which is not less incontestable than it is mysterious. The law of Solidarity makes its appearance so frequently and so strikingly, in the individual and in the masses, in details and in the aggregate, in particular and in general facts, that to fail to recognise it implies either the blindness of sectarianism or the zeal of imbittered controversy.

The first rule of all human justice is to concentrate the punishment of an action on its author, in virtue of the principle that faults are personal. But this law, sacred as regards individuals, is not the law of God, or even the law of society.

Why is this man rich? Because his father was active, honest, industrious, and economical. The father practised virtue; the son reaps the rewards.

Why is this other man always suffering, sick, feeble, timorous, and wretched? Because his father, endowed with a powerful constitution, abused it by debauchery and excess. To the guilty fall the agreeable consequences of vice, to the innocent fall its fatal consequences.

There exists not a man upon this earth whose condition has not been determined by thousands of millions of facts in which his own determinations have had no part. What I complain of to-day was perhaps caused by the caprice of my great-grandfather, etc.

nates from individuality; consequences are spread over the community.

We must remark that it is in the nature of every man *to desire to be happy.* You may say that I am extolling egotism if you will; I extol nothing; I show, I prove undeniably, the existence of an innate universal sentiment, which can never cease to exist,—personal interest, the desire for happiness, and the repugnance to pain.

Hence it follows that the individual is led so to order his conduct that the good consequences of his actions accrue to himself, while the bad effects fall upon others. He endeavours to spread these bad consequences over the greatest possible number of men, in order that they may be less perceived, and call forth less reaction.

But opinion, *that mistress of the world,* the daughter of solidarity, brings together all those scattered grievances, and collects all aggrieved interests into a formidable resisting mass. When a man's habits become injurious to those who live around him, they call forth a feeling of repulsion. We judge such habits severely. We denounce them, we brand them; and the man who gives himself up to them becomes an object of distrust, of contempt, and of abhorrence. If he reap some advantages, they are soon far more than compensated by the sufferings which public aversion accumulates on his head. To the troublesome consequences which a bad habit always entails in virtue of the law of *Responsibility,* there come to be added other consequences still more grievous in virtue of the law of *Solidarity.*

Our contempt for the man soon extends to the habit, to the vice; and as the want of consideration is one of our most powerful springs of action, it is clear that solidarity, by the reaction which it brings to bear against vicious acts, tends to restrain and to prevent them.

Solidarity, then, like Responsibility, is a *progressive force;* and we see that, in relation to the author of the act, it resolves itself, if I may so speak, into *repercussive or reflected responsibility;* that it is still a system of reciprocal rewards and punishments, admirably fitted to circumscribe evil, to extend good, and to urge on mankind on the road of progress.

But in order that it should operate in this way,—in order that those who benefit or suffer from an action which is not their own should react upon its author by approbation or disapprobation, by gratitude or resistance, by esteem, affection, praise, or blame,

hatred or vengeance,—one condition is indispensable; and that condition is, that the connecting link between the act and all its effects should be known and appreciated.

When the public is mistaken in this respect, the law fails in its design.

An act is hurtful to the masses; but the masses are convinced that this act is advantageous to them. What is the consequence? The consequence is, that instead of reacting against it, in place of condemning it, and by that means restraining it, the public exalt it, honour it, extol it, and repeat it.

Nothing is more frequent, and here is the reason of it:

An act produces on the masses not only an effect, but a series of effects. Now it frequently happens that the primary effect is a local good, visible and tangible, whilst the ulterior effects set a-filtering through the body politic evils which are difficult to discover or to connect with their cause.

War is an example of this. In the infancy of society, we do not perceive all the consequences of war. And, to say truth, in a state of civilisation in which there is a less amount of anterior labour (capital) exposed to destruction, less science and money devoted to the machinery of war, etc., these consequences are less prejudicial than they afterwards become. We see only the first campaign, the booty which follows victory, the intoxication of triumph. At that stage, war and warriors are very popular. Then we see the enemy, having become conqueror in his turn, burning down houses and harvests, levying contributions, and imposing laws. In these alternations of success and misfortune, we see generations of men annihilated, agriculture crushed, and two nations impoverished. We see the most important portion of the people contemning the arts of peace, turning their arms against the institutions of their country, serving as the tools of despotism, employing their restless energy in sedition and civil discord, and creating barbarism and solitude at home, as they had formerly done among their neighbours. Do we then pronounce war to be plunder upon a great scale? . . . No; we see its effects without desiring to understand its cause; and when this people, in a state of decadence, shall be invaded in its turn by a swarm of conquerors, centuries after the catastrophe, grave historians will relate that the nation fell because the people had become enervated by peace, because they had forgotten the art of war and the austere virtues of their ancestors.

I could point out the same illusions in connexion with the system of slavery. . . . .

The same thing is true of religious errors. . . . .

In our own day, the *régime* of prohibition gives rise to the same fallacy. . . . .

To bring back public opinion, by the diffusion of knowledge and the profound appreciation of causes and effects, into that intelligent state in which bad tendencies come to be branded, and prejudicial measures opposed, is to render a great service to one's country. When public opinion, deceived and misled, honours what is worthy of contempt, contemns what is honourable, punishes virtue and rewards vice, encourages what is hurtful and discourages what is useful, applauds a lie and smothers truth under indifference or insult, a nation turns its back upon progress, and can only be reclaimed by terrible lessons and catastrophes.

We have indicated elsewhere the gross misuse which certain Socialist schools have made of the word Solidarity. . . . .

Let us now see in what spirit human laws should be framed.

It seems to me that here there can be no room for doubt. Human law should coincide with the natural law. It should facilitate and ensure the just retribution of men's acts; in other words, it should circumscribe solidarity, and organize reaction in order to enforce responsibility. The law can have no other object than to restrain vicious actions and to multiply virtuous ones, and for that purpose it should favour the just distribution of rewards and punishments, so that the bad effects of an act should be concentrated as much as possible on the person who commits it. . . . .

In acting thus, the law conforms itself to the nature of things; solidarity induces a reaction against a vicious act, and the law only regulates that reaction. . . . .

The law thus contributes to progress: The more rapidly it brings back the bad effect of the act upon the agent, the more surely it restrains the act itself.

To give an example: Violence is attended with pernicious consequences. Among savages the repression of violence is left to the natural course of things; and what happens? It provokes a terrible reaction. When a man has committed an act of violence against another man, an inextinguishable desire of vengeance is lighted up in the family of the injured party, and is transmitted

from generation to generation. The law interferes; and what ought it to do? Should it limit itself to stifle the desire for vengeance, to repress it, to punish it? It is clear that this would be to encourage violence, by sheltering it from reprisals. This is not, then, what the law should do. It ought to substitute itself, so to speak, for the spirit of vengeance, by organizing in its place a reaction against the violence. It should say to the injured family, "I charge myself with the repression of the act you complain of." When the whole tribe considers itself as injured and menaced, the law inquires into the grievance, interrogates the guilty party, makes sure that there is no error as to the fact and as to the person, and thus represses with regularity and certainty an act which would have been punished irregularly.* . . . .

* This sketch terminates here abruptly; the *economic* view of the law of solidarity is not indicated. We may refer the reader to Part I., chapter x., and *ante*, chapter xi.

Moreover, the whole scope of this work on the Harmonies, the concordance of interests, and the grand maxims, "The prosperity of each is the prosperity of all—the prosperity of all is the prosperity of each," etc., the accord between property and community, the services of capital, extension of the domain of the gratuitous, etc., are all developments in a utilitarian point of view of the very title of this chapter,—Solidarity.—NOTE OF THE EDITOR.

XXII.

SOCIAL MOTIVE FORCE.

It belongs to no human science to assign the ultimate reason of things.

Man suffers; society suffers. We ask why? This is to ask why God has been pleased to indue man with sensibility and free will. As regards this, no one knows more than the revelation in which he has faith has taught him.

But whatever may have been the designs of God, what human science can take as its point of departure is a positive fact, namely, that man has been created *free* and indued with *feeling*.

This is so true that I defy those who are astonished at it to conceive a living, thinking, acting being, indued with volition and affections—such a being, in short, as man—yet destitute of sensibility and free will.

Could God have ordered things otherwise? Reason undoubtedly answers *yes*, but imagination says eternally *no*, so radically impossible is it for us to separate in thought humanity from this double attribute. Now, to be indued with *feeling* is to be capable of experiencing sensations which are agreeable or painful. Hence comfort or uneasiness. From the moment, then, that God gave existence to sensibility, He permitted evil, or the possibility of evil.

In giving us free will, He has indued us with the faculty, at least in a certain measure, of shunning evil and seeking after good. Free will supposes and accompanies intelligence—what would the faculty of choosing signify if it were not allied with the faculty of examining, of comparing, of judging? Thus, every man who comes into the world brings with him *mind* and a *motive force*.

The motive force is that personal irresistible impulse, the essence of all our forces, which leads us to shun Evil and seek after Good. We term it the instinct of preservation, personal or private interest.

This sentiment has been sometimes decried, sometimes misun-

derstood, but as regards its existence there can be no doubt. Irresistibly we seek after all which, according to our notions, can ameliorate our destiny, and we avoid all which is likely to deteriorate it. This is at least as certain as it is that every material molecule possesses centripetal and centrifugal force. And just as the double movement of attraction and repulsion is the grand spring of the physical world, we may affirm that the double force of human attraction towards happiness and human repulsion from pain is the mainspring of the social mechanism.

But it is not enough that man is irresistibly led to prefer good to evil; he must also be able to discern what is good and what is evil. This is what God has provided for in giving him that marvellous and complex mechanism called intelligence. To fix his attention, to compare, judge, reason, connect effects with causes, to remember, to foresee; such are—if I may use the expression—the wheels of that admirable machine.

The impulsive force which is possessed by each of us moves under the direction of our intelligence. But our intelligence is imperfect. It is liable to error. We compare, we judge, we act in consequence; but we may err, we may make a bad choice, we may tend towards evil, mistaking it for good, or we may shun good, mistaking it for evil. This is the first source of social *dissonances;* and it is inevitable, for this reason, that the great motive spring of humanity—personal interest—is not, like material attraction, a blind force, but a force guided by an imperfect intelligence. Let us be very sure, then, that we shall not see Harmony except under this restriction. God has not seen proper to found social order or Harmony upon perfection, but upon human perfectibility, our capacity for improvement. If our intelligence is imperfect, it is improvable. It develops, enlarges, and rectifies itself. It begins of new and verifies its operations. Experience at each moment puts us right, and Responsibility suspends over our heads a complete system of punishments and rewards. Every step that we take on the road of error plunges us into increased suffering, and in such a way that the warning cannot fail to be heard, and the rectification of our determinations, and consequently of our actions, follows, sooner or later, with infallible certainty.

Under the impulse which urges him on, ardent to pursue happiness, prompt to seize it, man may be seeking his own good in the misery of others. This is a second and an abundant source of discordant social combinations. But the limit of such disturbances is

marked; and they find their inevitable doom in the law of Solidarity. Individual force thus misapplied calls forth opposition from all the analogous forces, which, antagonistic to evil by their nature, repel injustice and chastise it.

It is thus that progress is realized, and it is not the less progress from being dearly bought. It springs from a native impulse, which is universal, and inherent in our nature, directed by an intelligence which is frequently misled, and subjected to a will which is frequently depraved. Arrested on its march by Error and Injustice, it receives the all-powerful assistance of Responsibility and Solidarity to enable it to surmount these obstacles, and it cannot fail to receive that assistance since it springs from these obstacles themselves.

This internal, universal, and imperishable motive power, which resides in each individual and constitutes him an active being, this tendency of every man to pursue happiness and shun misery, this product, this effect, this necessary complement of sensibility, without which sensibility would be only an inexplicable scourge, this primordial phenomenon which is at the bottom of all human actions, this attractive and repulsive force which we have denominated the mainspring of the social mechanism, has had for detractors the greater part of our publicists; and this is one of the strangest aberrations which the annals of science present.

It is true that self-interest is the cause of all the evils, as it is of all the good, incident to man. It cannot fail to be so, since it determines all our acts. Seeing this, some publicists can imagine no better means of eradicating evil than by stifling *self-interest*. But as by this means they would destroy the very spring and motive of our activity, they have thought proper to endow us with a different motive force, namely, *devotion, self-sacrifice*. They hope that henceforth all transactions and social combinations will take place at their bidding, upon the principle of self-abandonment. We are no longer to pursue our own happiness, but the happiness of others; the warnings of sensibility are to go for nothing, like the rewards and punishments of Responsibility. All the laws of our nature are to be reversed; the spirit of sacrifice is to be substituted for the instinct of preservation; in a word, no one is to think longer on his own personality, but for the purpose of hastening to sacrifice it to the public good. It is from such a universal transformation of the human heart that certain publicists, who think themselves very religious, expect to realize perfect social harmony. They have for-

Given on the one hand a certain quantity of clay, and on the other a potter, what should the potter do in order to turn that clay to the best account?

Our publicists may differ when the question comes to be which is the best potter, who forms and moulds the clay most advantageously? but they are all at one upon this, that their function is to knead the human clay, and what the clay has to do is simply to be kneaded by them. Under the title of legislators, they establish between themselves and the human race relations analagous to those of guardian and ward. The idea never occurs to them that the human race is a living sentient body, indued with volition, and acting according to laws which it is not their business to invent, since they already exist, nor to impose, but to study; that humanity is an aggregate of beings in all respects like themselves, and in no way inferior or subordinate; endowed both with an impulse to act, and with intelligence to choose; which feels on all sides the stimulus of Responsibility and Solidarity; and that, in short, from all these phenomena there results an aggregate of self-existing relations, which it is not the business of science to create, as they imagine, but to observe.

Rousseau, I think, is the publicist who has most naïvely exhumed from antiquity this omnipotence of the resuscitated legislator of the Greeks. Convinced that the social order is a human invention, he compares it to a machine; men are the wheels of that machine, the ruler sets it in motion; the lawgiver invents it, under the impulse given him by the publicist, who thus finds himself definitively the mainspring and regulator of the human species. This is the reason why the publicist never fails to address himself to the legislator in the imperative style; he decrees him to decree: "Found your society upon such or such a principle; give it good manners and customs; bend it to the yoke of religion; direct its aims and energies towards arms, or commerce, or agriculture, or virtue," etc. Others more modest speak in this way: "Idlers will not be tolerated in the republic; you will distribute the population conveniently between the towns and the country; you will take order that there shall be neither rich nor poor," etc.

These formulas attest the unmeasured presumption of those who employ them. They imply a doctrine which does not leave one atom of dignity to the human race.

I know not whether they are more false in theory or pernicious in practice. In both views, they lead to deplorable results.

They would lead us to believe that the social economy is an artificial arrangement coined in the brain of an inventor. Hence every publicist constitutes himself an inventor. His greatest desire is to find acceptance for his mechanism; his greatest care is to create abhorrence of all others, and principally of that which springs spontaneously from the organization of man and from the nature of things. The books conceived and written on this plan are, and can only be, prolix declamations against Society.

This false science does not study the concatenation of effects and causes. It does not inquire into the good and evil produced by men's actions, and trust afterwards to the motive force of Society in choosing the road it is to follow. No; it enjoins, it constrains, it imposes, or, if it cannot do that, it counsels; like a natural philosopher who should say to the stone, "Thou art not supported; I order thee to fall, or at least I advise it." It is upon this footing that M. Droz has said that "the design of political economy is to render easy circumstances as general as possible,"—a definition which has been welcomed with great favour by the Socialists, because it opens a door to every Utopia, and leads to artificial regulation. What should we say if M. Arago were to open his course in this way, "The object of astronomy is to render gravitation as general as possible"? It is true that men are animated beings, indued with volition, and acting under the influence of free will. But there also resides in them an internal force, a sort of gravitation: and the question is to know towards what they gravitate. If it be fatally, inevitably, towards evil, there is no remedy, and assuredly the remedy will not come to us from a publicist subject like other men to the common tendency. If it be towards good, here we have the motive force already found; science has no need to substitute for it constraint or advice. Its part is to enlighten our free will, to display effects as flowing from causes, well assured that, under the influence of truth, "ease and material prosperity tend to become as general as possible."

Practically, the doctrine which would place the motive force of society, not in mankind at large, nor in their peculiar organization, but in legislators and governments, is attended with consequences still more deplorable. It tends to draw down upon Governments a crushing responsibility, from which they never recover. If there are sufferings, it is the fault of Government; if there are poor, it is the fault of Government. Is not Government the prime mover? If the mainspring is bad or inoperative, break it, and choose

another. Or else they lay the blame on science itself; and in our days we have it repeated *ad nauseam* that "all social sufferings are imputable to political economy."* Why not, when Political Economy presents herself as having for design to realize the happiness of men without their co-operation? When such notions prevail, the last thing men take it into their heads to do is to turn their regards upon themselves, and inquire whether the true cause of their sufferings is not their own ignorance and injustice; their ignorance which brings them under the discipline of Responsibility, and their injustice which draws down upon them the reaction of Solidarity. How should mankind ever dream of seeking in their errors the cause of their sufferings when the human race is persuaded that it is inert by nature, and that the principle of all activity, consequently of all responsibility, is external, and resides in the will of the lawgiver and the governing power?

Were I called upon to mark the feature which distinguishes Socialism from Political Economy, I should find it here. Socialism boasts of a vast number of sects. Each sect has its Utopia, and so far are they from any mutual understanding, that they declare against each other war to the knife. The *atelier social organisé* of M. Blanc, and the *an-archie* of M. Proudhon,—the *association* of Fourier, and the *communisme* of M. Cabet,—are as different from each other as night is from day. Why do these sectarian leaders, then, range themselves under the common denomination of *Socialists*, and what is the bond which unites them against natural or providential society? They have no other bond than this, *they all repudiate natural society.* What they wish is an artificial society springing ready made from the brain of the inventor. No doubt, each of them wishes to be the Jupiter of this Minerva—no doubt each of them hugs his own contrivance, and dreams of his own social order. But they have this in common, that they recognise in humanity neither the motive force, which urges mankind on to good, nor the *curative* force, which delivers them from evil. They fight among themselves as to what form they are to mould the human clay into, but they are all agreed that humanity is clay to be moulded. Humanity is not in their eyes a living harmonious being, that God

* "Poverty is the fruit of Political Economy. . . . Political Economy requires death to come to its aid; . . . it is the theory of instability and theft."—PROUDHON, *Contradictions Économiques*, t. xi. p. 214. "If the people want bread, . . . it is the fault of Political Economy."—*Ibid.*

himself has provided with progressive and self-sustaining forces, but rather a mass of inert matter which has been waiting for them to impart to it sentiment and life; it is not a subject to be studied, but a subject to be experimented on.

Political Economy, on the other hand, after having clearly shown that there are in each man forces of impulse and repulsion, the aggregate of which constitutes the social impellent, and after being convinced that this motive force tends towards good, never dreams of annihilating it in order to substitute another of its own creation, but studies the varied and complicated social phenomena to which it gives birth.

Is this to say that Political Economy is as much a stranger to social progress, as astronomy is to the motion of the heavenly bodies? Certainly not. Political Economy has to do with beings which are intelligent and free,—and, as such, let us never forget, subject to error. Their tendency is towards good; but they may err. Science, then, interferes usefully, not to create causes and effects, not to change the tendencies of man, not to subject him to organizations, to injunctions, or even to advice, but to point out to him the good and the evil which result from his determinations.

Political Economy is thus quite a science of observation and exposition. She does not say to men, "I enjoin you, I counsel you, not to go too near the fire;" she does not say, "I have invented a social organization; the gods have taught me institutions which will keep you at a respectful distance from the fire." No, Political Economy only shows men clearly that fire will burn them, proclaims it, proves it, and does the same thing as regards all other social or moral phenomena, convinced that this is enough. The repugnance to die by fire is considered as a primordial pre-existent fact, which Political Economy has not created, and which she cannot alter or change.

Economists cannot be always at one; but it is easy to see that their differences are quite of another kind from those which divide the Socialists. Two men who devote their whole attention to observe one and the same phenomenon and its effects—rent, for example, exchange, competition—may not arrive at the same conclusion, and this proves nothing more than that one of the two has observed the phenomenon inaccurately or imperfectly. It is an operation to be repeated. With the aid of other observers, the probability is that truth in the end will be discovered. It is for this reason, that if each economist were, like

each astronomer, to make himself fully acquainted with what his predecessors have done, as far as they have gone, the science would be progressive, and for that reason more and more useful, rectifying constantly observations inaccurately made, and adding indefinitely new observations to those which had been made before.

But the Socialists,—each pursuing his own road, and coining artificial combinations in the mint of his own brain,—may pursue their inquiries in this way to all eternity without coming to any common understanding, and without the labours of one aiding to any extent the labours of another. Say profited by the labours of Adam Smith; Rossi by those of Say; Blanqui and Joseph Garnier by those of all their predecessors. But Plato, Sir Thomas More, Harrington, Fénélon, Fourier, might amuse themselves with organizing according to their own fancy a Republic, an Utopia, an Oceana, a Salente, a Phalanstère, and no one would ever discover the slightest affinity between their chimerical creations. These dreamers spin all out of their own imaginations, men as well as things. They invent a social order without respect to the human heart, and then they invent a human heart to suit their social order. . . . . .

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XXIII.

EXISTENCE OF EVIL.

In these last days science has retrograded and been driven back. It has been bent and twisted under the obligation imposed upon it, if I may so speak, of denying the existence of Evil under pain of being convicted of denying the existence of God.

Writers whose business it is to display exquisite sensibility, unbounded philanthropy, and unrivalled devotion to religion, have got into the way of saying, "Evil cannot enter into the providential plan. Suffering is no ordinance of God and nature, but comes from human institutions."

As this doctrine falls in with the passions that they desire to cherish, it soon becomes popular. Books and journals have been filled with declamations against society. Science is no longer permitted to study facts impartially. Whoever dares to warn men that a certain vice, a certain habit, leads necessarily to certain hurtful consequences, is marked down as a man destitute of human feelings, without religion, an Atheist, a Malthusian, an Economist.

Socialism has carried its folly so far as to announce the termination of all social suffering, but not of all individual suffering. It has not ventured to predict that a day will come when man will no longer suffer, grow old, and die.

Now, I would ask, is it easier to reconcile with the infinite goodness of God, evil which assails individually every man who comes into the world, than evil which is extended over society at large? And then is it not a contradiction so transparent as to be puerile, to deny the existence of suffering in the masses, when we admit its existence in individuals?

Man suffers, and will always suffer. Society, then, also suffers, and will always suffer. Those who address mankind should have the courage to tell them this. Humanity is not a fine lady, with delicate nerves, and an irritable temperament, from whom we

must conceal the coming storm, more especially when to foresee it is the only way to ensure our getting out of it safely. In this respect, all the books with which France has been inundated, from Sismondi and Buret downwards, appear to me to be wanting in virility. Their authors dare not tell the truth; nay, they dare not investigate it, for fear of discovering that absolute poverty is the necessary starting-point of the human race, and that, consequently, so far are we from being in a position to attribute that poverty to the social order, it is to the social order that we must attribute all the triumphs which we have already achieved over our original destitution. But, then, after such an avowal, they could no longer constitute themselves tribunes of the people, and the avengers of the masses oppressed by civilisation.

After all, science merely establishes, combines, and deduces facts; she does not create them; she does not produce them, nor is she responsible for them. Is it not strange that men should have gone the length of announcing and disseminating the paradox, that if mankind suffer, their sufferings are due to Political Economy? Thus, after being blamed for investigating the sufferings of society, Political Economy is accused of engendering those sufferings by that same investigation.

I assert that science can do nothing more than observe and establish facts. Prove to us that humanity, instead of being progressive, is retrograde; and that inevitable and insurmountable laws urge mankind on to irremediable deterioration. Show us that the law of Malthus and that of Ricardo are true in their worst and most pernicious sense, and that it is impossible to deny the tyranny of capital, or the incompatibility between machinery and labour, or any of the other contradictory alternatives in which Châteaubriand and Tocqueville have placed the human race; then I maintain that science ought to proclaim this, and proclaim it aloud.

Why should we shut our eyes to a gulf which is gaping before us? Do we require the naturalist or the physiologist to reason upon individual man, on the assumption that his organs are exempt from pain or not liable to destruction? *Pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris;* such is the declaration of anatomical science backed by universal experience. No doubt, this is a hard truth for us to receive—not less hard than the contested propositions of Malthus and Ricardo. But are we for this reason to spare the delicate sensibility which has sprung up all at once among our modern

publicists, and has given existence to Socialism? Is medical science, for the same reason, to affirm audaciously that we are constantly renewing our youth and are immortal? Or, if medical science refuse to stoop to such juggling, are we to foam at the mouth, and cry out, as has been done in the case of the social sciences—"Medical science admits the existence of pain and death; it is misanthropical; it is cruel; it accuses God of being malevolent or powerless; it is impious; it is atheistical; nay, more, it creates the evil the existence of which it refuses to deny"?

I have never doubted that the Socialist schools have led away many generous hearts and earnest minds, and I have no wish to humiliate any one. But the general character of Socialism is very whimsical, and I cannot help asking myself how long such a tissue of puerilities can continue in vogue.

In Socialism all is affectation.

It affects scientific forms and scientific language, and we have seen what sort of science it teaches.

In its writings, it affects a delicacy of nerve so feminine as to be unable to listen to a tale of social sufferings; and whilst it has introduced into literature this insipid and mawkish sensibility, it has established in the arts a taste for the trivial and the horrible; in ordinary life, a sort of scarecrow fashion in dress, appearance, and deportment—the long beard, the grim and sullen countenance, the vulgar airs of a village Titan or Prometheus. In politics (where such puerilities are less innocent), Socialism has introduced the doctrine of energetic means of *transition*, the violence of revolutionary practices, life and material interests sacrificed *en masse* to what is ideal and chimerical. But what Socialism affects, above all, is a certain show and appearance of religion! This is only one of the Socialist tactics, it is true—such tactics are always disgraceful to a school when they lead to hypocrisy.

These Socialists are perpetually talking to us of Christ; but I would ask them, how it is that while they acknowledge that Christ, the innocent *par excellence*, prayed in His agony that "the cup might pass from Him," adding, "Nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done," they should think it strange that mankind at large should be called upon to exercise resignation also.

No doubt, had God willed it, He might have so arranged His almighty plans that just as the individual advances towards inevitable death, the human race might have advanced towards inevitable destruction. In that case, we should have had no choice but to

submit, and science, whether she liked it or not, must have admitted the sombre social *dénoûment*, just as she now admits the melancholy individual *dénoûment*.

But happily it is not so.

There is redemption for man, and for humanity.

The one is indued with an immortal soul; the other with indefinite perfectibility. . . . . .

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XXIV.

PERFECTIBILITY.

THAT the human race is perfectible; that it progresses towards a higher and higher level; that its wealth is increasing and becoming more equalized; that its ideas are being enlarged and purified; that its errors, and the oppressions which these errors support, are disappearing; that its knowledge shines with brighter and brighter effulgence; that its morality is improving; that it is learning, by reason or by experience, in the domain of responsibility, the art of earning a constantly larger amount of recompense, and a constantly smaller amount of chastisement; that, consequently, evil is continually lessening, and good continually increasing;—these are conclusions which it is impossible to doubt when we scrutinize the nature of man and that intelligent principle, which is his essence, which was breathed into him with the breath of life, and warrants the scriptural declaration that man is made in the image of God.

We know too well that man is not a perfect being. Were he perfect, he would not reflect a vague resemblance of God; he would be God himself. He is imperfect, then,—subject to error and to suffering,—but, on the other hand, were he stationary, what title could he have to claim the unspeakable privilege of bearing in himself the image of a perfect being?

Moreover, if intelligence, which is the faculty of comparing, of judging, of rectifying errors, of learning, does not constitute individual perfectibility, what can constitute it?

And if the union of all individual perfectibilities, especially among beings capable of communicating to each other their acquisitions, does not afford a guarantee for collective perfectibility, we must renounce all philosophy and all moral and political science.

What constitutes man's perfectibility is his intelligence, or the faculty which has been given to him of passing from error, which

is the parent of evil, to truth, which is the generating principle of good.

It is science and experience which cause man to abandon, in his mind, error for truth, and afterwards, in his conduct, evil for good; it is the discovery which he makes, in phenomena and in acts, of effects which he had not suspected.

But to enable him to acquire this science, he must have an interest in acquiring it. In order that he should profit by this experience, he must have an interest in profiting by it. It is in the law of responsibility, then, that we must search for the means of realizing human perfectibility.

And as we can form no idea of responsibility apart from liberty; as acts which are not voluntary can afford neither instruction nor available experience; as beings capable of being improved or deteriorated by the exclusive action of external causes without the participation of choice, reflection, or free will (although this happens in the case of unconscious organized matter), could not be called perfectible, in the moral acceptation of the word, we must conclude that liberty is the very essence of progress. To impair man's liberty is not only to hurt and degrade him; it is to change his nature; it is (in the measure and proportion in which such oppression is exercised) to render him incapable of improvement; it is to despoil him of his resemblance to the Creator; it is to dim and deaden in his noble nature that vital spark which glowed there from the beginning.

But in thus proclaiming aloud our fixed and unalterable belief in human perfectibility, and in progress, which is necessary in every sense, and which, by a marvellous correspondence, is as much more active in one direction as it is more active in all others, we must not be regarded as indulging in Utopianism, or be considered as optimists, believing "all to be for the best, in the best of worlds," and expecting the immediate arrival of the millennium.

Alas! when we turn our regards on the world as it is, and see around us the enormous amount of mud and meanness, suffering and complaint, vice and crime, which still exist,—when we reflect on the moral action exerted on society by the classes who ought to point out to the lagging multitude the way to the New Jerusalem, —when we ask ourselves what use the rich make of their fortune, the poets of their genius, philosophers of their scientific lucubrations, journalists of the ministry with which they are invested, high functionaries, ministers of state, representatives of the people, kings, of

ter than an Economist, is this, that human progress, especially in its dawn, is excessively slow, so very slow as to give rise to despair in the heart of the philanthropist. . . . .

Men whose genius invests them with the power of the press ought, it seems to me, to regard things more nearly, before scattering amidst the social fermentation discouraging speculations which imply for humanity the alternative of two modes of degradation.

We have already seen some examples of this, when treating of population, of rent, of machinery, of the division of inheritance, etc.

Here is another, taken from M. de Châteaubriand, who merely formulates a fashionable conventionalism: "The corruption of morals and the civilisation of nations march abreast. If the last present means of liberty, the first is an inexhaustible source of slavery."

It is beyond doubt that civilisation presents means of liberty, and it is equally beyond doubt that corruption is a source of slavery. That which is doubtful, more than doubtful,—and what for my own part I deny solemnly and formally,—is this, that civilisation and corruption march abreast. If it were so, a fatal equilibrium would be established between *the means of liberty* and *the sources of slavery;* and immobility would be the fate of the human race.

There cannot, moreover, enter into the human heart a thought more melancholy, more discouraging, more desolating, a thought more fitted to urge us to despair, to irreligion, to impiety, to blasphemy, than this, that every human being, whether he wills it or not, whether he doubts it or not, proceeds on the road of civilisation—and civilisation is corruption!

Then, if all civilisation be corruption, wherein consist its advantages? It is impossible to pretend that civilisation is unattended with moral, intellectual, and material advantages, for then it would cease to be civilisation. As Châteaubriand employs the term, civilisation signifies material progress, an increase of population, of wealth, of prosperity, the development of intelligence, the advancement of the sciences; and all these steps of progress imply, according to him, a corresponding retrogression of the moral sense.

This were enough to tempt men to a wholesale suicide; for I repeat that material and intellectual progress is not of our preparation and ordination. God himself has decreed it, in giving us expansible desires and improvable faculties. We are urged on to it without wishing it, without knowing it,—Châteaubriand, and his

equals, if he has any, more than any one else. And this progress is to sink us deeper and deeper into immorality and slavery, by means of corruption! . . . . . .

I thought at first that Châteaubriand had let slip an unguarded phrase, as poets frequently do, without examining it too narrowly. With that class of writers, sound sometimes runs away with sense. Provided the antithesis is symmetrical, what matters it that the thought be false or objectionable? Provided the metaphor produces its intended effect, that it has an air of inspiration and depth, that it secures the applause of the public, and enables the author to pass for an oracle, of what importance are exactitude and truth?

I had thought, then, that Châteaubriand, giving way to a momentary excess of misanthropy, had allowed himself to formulate a conventionalism, a vulgarism dragged from the kennel. "Civilisation and corruption march abreast," is a phrase that has been repeated since the days of Heraclitus, but it is not more true on that account.

At a distance of several years, however, the same great writer has reproduced the same thought, and in a more didactic form; which shows that it expressed his deliberate opinion. It is proper to combat it, not because it comes from Châteaubriand, but because it has got abroad, and so generally prevails.

"The material condition is ameliorated," he says, "intellectual progress advances, and nations, in place of profiting, decay. Here is the explanation of the decay of society and the growth of the individual. Had the moral sense been developed in proportion to the development of intelligence, there would have been a counter weight, and the human race would have grown greater without danger. But it is just the contrary which happens. The perception of good and evil is obscured in proportion as intelligence is enlightened; conscience becomes narrowed in proportion as ideas are enlarged."—*Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*, vol. xi.

XXV.

RELATIONS OF POLITICAL ECONOMY WITH MORALS, WITH POLITICS, WITH LEGISLATION.*

WITH RELIGION.

A PHENOMENON is always found placed between two other phenomena, one of which is its *efficient*, and the other its *final* cause; and science has not done with that phenomenon as long as either of these relations remains undeveloped.

The human mind generally begins, I think, with the discovery of final causes, because they are more immediately interesting to us. No species of knowledge, besides, leads us with more force towards religious ideas, or is more fitted to make us feel in all the fibres of our heart a lively sense of gratitude for the inexhaustible goodness of God.

Habit, it is true, has so familiarized us with a great number of these *providential intentions*, that we enjoy them without thought. We see, and we hear, without thinking of the ingenious mechanism of the eye and of the ear. The sun, the dew, the rain, lavish upon us their useful effects, or their gentle sensations, without awakening our surprise or our gratitude. This is solely owing to the continued action upon us of these admirable phenomena. For let a final cause, although comparatively insignificant, come to be disclosed to us for the first time, let the botanist explain to us why this plant affects such or such a form, or why that other is clothed in such or such a colour, we immediately feel in our heart the unspeakable enchantment with which new proofs of the power, the goodness, and the wisdom of God never fail to penetrate us.

The region of final intentions, then, is for man's imagination as an atmosphere impregnated with religious ideas.

But after we have perceived, or had a glimpse of the phenome-

* The author has unfortunately left nothing on the subject of these intended chapters, except an introduction to the chapter which follows.—EDITOR.

non in this aspect, we have still to study it in another relation, that is to say, to seek for its efficient cause.

It is strange, but it sometimes happens, that after having obtained the full knowledge of that cause, we find that it carries with it so necessarily the effect which we had admired at first, that we refuse to recognise in it longer the character of a final cause; and we say: "I was very simple to believe that God had provided such an arrangement with such a design; I see now that the cause which I have discovered being given (and it is inevitable), this arrangement must follow necessarily, apart from any pretended providential intention."

It is thus that defective and superficial science, with its scalpel and its analyses, comes sometimes to destroy in our souls the religious sentiment to which the simple aspect of nature had given rise.

This is the case frequently with the anatomist and the astronomer. What a strange thing it is, exclaims the ignorant man, that when an extraneous substance penetrates into a tissue, where its presence does great injury, an inflammation and a suppuration take place, which tend to expel it! No, says the anatomist, there is nothing intentional in that expulsion. It is a *necessary* effect of the suppuration; and the suppuration itself is a *necessary* effect of the presence of an extraneous substance in our tissues. If you wish it, I shall explain to you the mechanism, and you will acknowledge yourself that the effect follows the cause, but that the cause has not been arranged intentionally to produce that effect, since it is itself the necessary effect of an anterior cause.

How I admire, says the ignorant man, the foresight of God who has willed that the rain should not descend on the soil in a sheet, but should fall in drops, as if it came from the gardener's watering-pot! Were it not so, vegetation would be impossible. You throw away your admiration, answers the learned naturalist; the cloud is not a sheet of water; if it were, it could not be supported by the atmosphere. It is a collection of microscopic vesicles, or minute bladders like soap-bubbles. When their density increases, or when they burst by compression, these thousands of millions of infinitesimal drops fall, growing larger in their descent by the vapour of the water which they precipitate, etc. If vegetation is benefited in consequence, it is by accident; but we must not think that the Creator amuses himself in sending us down water through the sieve of a monster watering-pot.

Ignorance, we must confess, very often imparts a certain plausibility to science, when the connexion of causes and effects is regarded in this way, by attributing a phenomenon to a final intention which does not exist, and which is dissipated before the light of superior knowledge.

Thus, in former days, before men had any knowledge of electricity, they were frightened by the noise of thunder, being able to recognise in that astounding voice, bellowing amid the storm, nothing less than a manifestation of Divine wrath. This is an association of ideas which, like many others, has disappeared before the progress of physical science. Man is so constituted, that when a phenomenon affects him, he searches for the cause of it; and if he finds out that cause, he gives it a name. Then he sets himself to find out the cause of that cause, and so he goes on until he can mount no higher, when he stops, and exclaims, "*It is God; it is the will of God.*" This is his *ultima ratio.* He is arrested, however, only for the moment. Science advances, and soon this second, third, or fourth cause, which had remained unperceived, is revealed to his eyes. Then science says, This effect is not due, as we believed, to the immediate will of God, but to that natural cause which I have just discovered. And man, after having taken possession of this discovery, after having gained this step in the region of science, finds himself, so to speak, one step farther removed from the region of Faith, and again asks, What is the cause of that cause? And not finding it, he persists in the ever-recurring explanation, "It is the will of God." And so he proceeds onwards for indefinite ages, through a countless succession of scientific revelations and exercises of faith.

This procedure on the part of mankind must appear to superficial minds to be destructive of every religious idea; for is the result of it not this, that as science advances, God recedes? Do we not see clearly that the domain of final intentions is narrowed in proportion as the domain of natural causes is enlarged?

Unhappy are they who give to this fine problem so narrow a solution. No, it is not true that as science advances, the idea of God recedes. On the contrary, what is true is that, as our intelligence increases, this idea is enlarged, and broadened, and elevated. When we discover a natural cause for what we had imagined an immediate, spontaneous, supernatural act of the Divine will, are we to conclude that that will is absent or indifferent? No, indeed; all that it proves is, that that will acts by processes different from

those which it had pleased us to imagine. All that it proves is, that the phenomenon which we regarded as an accident in creation occupies its place in the universal frame; and that everything, even the most special effects, have been foreseen from all eternity by the divine prescience. What! is the idea which we form of the power of God lessened when we come to see that each of the countless results which we discover, or which escape our investigations, not only has its natural cause, but is bound up in an infinite circle of causes; so that there is not a detail of movement, of force, of form, of life, which is not the product of the great whole, or which can be explained apart from that whole.

But why this dissertation, which is foreign, as it would seem, to the main object of our inquiries? The phenomena of the social economy have likewise their efficient cause, and their providential intention. In this department, as in natural science, as in anatomy, or in astronomy, men have frequently denied the final cause precisely because the efficient cause assumes the character of an absolute necessity.

The social world abounds in harmonies, of which we can form no adequate or complete conception until the mind has remounted to causes, in order to seek their explanation, and descended to effects, to discover the destination of the phenomena. . . . .

ADDENDUM.

NOTE INTENDED BY THE AUTHOR AS AN ADDITION TO CHAPTER VI., ON *WEALTH*, PART I., P. 165.

Morality of Wealth.—We have just been engaged in studying wealth in an Economical point of view; it may not perhaps be useless to say something here of its Moral effects.

In all ages, wealth, in a moral point of view, has been the subject of controversy. Certain philosophers and certain religionists have commanded us to despise it; others have greatly prided themselves on the golden mean, *aurea mediocritas*. Few, if any, have admitted as moral an ardent longing after the goods of fortune.

Which are right? Which are wrong? It does not belong to Political Economy to treat of individual morality. I shall make only one remark: I am always inclined to think that in matters which lie within the domain of everyday practice, theorists, savants, philosophers, are much less likely to be right than this universal practice itself, when we include in the meaning of the word practice, not only the actions of the generality of men, but their sentiments and ideas.

Now, what does universal practice demonstrate in this case? It shows us all men endeavouring to emerge from their original state of poverty,—all preferring the sensation of satisfaction to the sensation of want, riches to poverty; all, I should say, or almost all, without excepting even those who declaim against wealth.

The desire for wealth is ardent, incessant, universal, irrepressible. In almost every part of the globe, it has triumphed over our natural aversion to toil. Whatever may be said to the contrary, it displays a character of avidity still baser among savage than among civilized nations. All our navigators who left Europe in the eighteenth century, imbued with the fashionable ideas of Rousseau, and expecting to find the men of nature at the antipodes disinterested, generous, hospitable, were struck with the devouring rapacity of these primitive barbarians. Our military men can tell us, in our own day, what we are to think of the boasted disinterestedness of the Arab tribes.

On the other hand, the opinions of all men, even of those who do not act up to their opinions, concur in honouring disinterestedness, generosity, self-control, and in branding that ill-regulated, inordinate love of wealth which causes men not to shrink from any means of obtaining it. The same public opinion sur-

rounds with esteem the man who, in whatever rank of life, devotes his honest and persevering labour to ameliorating the lot and elevating the condition of his family. It is from this combination of facts, ideas, and sentiments, it would seem to me, that we must form our judgment on wealth in connexion with individual morality.

First of all, we must acknowledge that the motive which urges us to the acquisition of riches is of providential creation,—natural, and consequently *moral*. It has its source in that original and general destitution which would be our lot in everything, if it did not create in us the desire to free ourselves from it. We must acknowledge, in the second place, that the efforts which men make to emerge from their primitive destitution, provided they keep within the limits of justice, are estimable and respectable, seeing that they are universally esteemed and respected. No one, moreover, will deny that labour is in itself of a moral nature. This is expressed in the common proverb which we find in all countries,—Idleness is the parent of vice. And we should fall into a glaring contradiction were we to say, on the one hand, that labour is indispensable to the morality of men, and, on the other, that men are immoral when they seek to realize wealth by their labour.

We must acknowledge, in the third place, that the desire of wealth becomes immoral when it goes the length of inducing us to depart from the rules of justice, and that avarice becomes more unpopular in proportion to the wealth of those who addict themselves to that passion.

Such is the judgment pronounced, not by certain philosophers or sects, but by the generality of men; and I adopt it.

I must guard myself, however, by adding that this judgment may be different at the present day from what it was in ancient times, without involving a contradiction.

The Essenians and Stoics lived in a state of society where wealth was always the reward of oppression, of pillage, and of violence. Not only was it deemed immoral in itself, but, in consequence of the immoral means employed in its acquisition, it revealed the immorality of those who possessed it. A reaction, even an exaggerated reaction, against riches and rich men was to be expected. Modern philosophers who declaim against wealth without taking into account this difference in the means of acquiring wealth, believe themselves Senecas, while they are only parrots, repeating what they do not understand.

But the question which Political Economy proposes is this: Is wealth for mankind a moral good or a moral evil? Does the progressive development of wealth imply, in a moral point of view, improvement or decadence?

The reader anticipates my answer, and will understand that I must say a few words on the subject of individual morality, in order to get quit of the contradiction, or rather of the impossibility, which would be implied in asserting that what is individual immorality is general morality.

Without having recourse to statistics, or the records of our prisons, we must handle a problem which may be enunciated in these terms:—

Is man degraded by exercising more power over nature—by constraining nature to serve him—by obtaining additional leisure—by freeing himself from the more imperious and pressing wants of his organization—by being enabled to rouse from sleep and inactivity his intellectual and moral faculties,—faculties which assuredly have not been given him to remain in eternal lethargy?

Is man degraded by being removed from a state the most inorganic, so to speak, and raised to a state of the highest spiritualism which it is possible for him to reach?

To enunciate the problem in this form is to resolve it.

I willingly grant, that when wealth is acquired by means which are immoral, it has an immoral influence, as among the Romans.

I also allow that when it is developed in a very unequal manner, creating a great gulf between classes, it has an immoral influence, and gives rise to revolutionary passions.

But does the same thing hold when wealth is the fruit of honest industry and free transactions, and is uniformly distributed over all classes? That would be a doctrine which it is impossible to maintain.

Socialist works, nevertheless, are crammed with declamations against the rich.

I really cannot comprehend how these schools, so opposite in other respects, but so unanimous in this, should not perceive the contradiction into which they fall.

On the one hand, wealth, according to the leaders of these schools, has a deleterious and demoralizing action, which debases the soul, hardens the heart, and leaves behind only a taste for depraved enjoyments. The rich have all manner of vices. The poor have all manner of virtues—they are just, sensible, disinterested, generous,—such is the favourite theme of these authors.

On the other hand, all the efforts of the Socialists' imagination, all the systems they invent, all the laws they wish to impose upon us, tend, if we are to believe them, to convert poverty into riches. . . . . .

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Y.

Youth of France, address to, I. i.-xv.

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